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Automotive News

SEPTEMBER 23, 1991

66th YEAR

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late news

France admits U.S. Accords

PARIS — The Industry Ministry confirmed late last week that Honda Motor Co. had received tentative approval to begin exporting U.S.-built Accord wagons to France outside the strictures of a European Community agreement that limits Japanese auto sales in Europe.

Citing the recent agreement, which allows France to limit Japanese penetration to 4.5 percent of its market, French customs authorities had blocked the importation of about 165 U.S.-built Accords. But after U.S. trade officials stepped in on Honda's behalf, French officials agreed to treat the Accords as American instead of Japanese cars.

Ford cuts 40 books for '92

DEARBORN, Mich. — Ford Motor Co.'s two automotive divisions have slashed at least 40 magazines from their 1992 model year

see LATE NEWS, 2

Big 3 team up on recycling

Consortium will explore design for disassembly

JACK KEEBLER
Staff Reporter

The Big 3 are about to form a consortium to study how to recycle even more of the automobile.

European carmakers, forced by tough legislation, are the world leaders in vehicle-recycling technology.

But Chrysler Corp., Ford Motor Co. and General Motors are poised to launch a consortium attack to catapult them ahead of European and Asian makers on recycling and "design for disassembly," sources at all three companies confirm.

Experts at the companies believe that American consumers will soon shop for recyclable vehicles with the same zeal that they exhibit in shopping for safety features.

Last week, Richard L. Klimisch, executive director of General Motors' environmental activities staff, said: "A Big 3 vehicle-recycling consortium will soon be announced." It would join other consortia formed by the increasingly cooperative Big 3.

In this case, the joint research will be moving out ahead of governmental regulations, which have prompted much recent Big 3 research on such issues as fuel economy and pollution control.

The new consortium will come despite what Klimisch described as a "surprising lack" of auto-recycling legislation. Automakers' environmental engineers, however, predict that U.S. consumers are likely to embrace recycling

see RECYCLE, 41

JOE WILSEMAN

Ford flares up

Ford Division will target import buyers and young people in the 1992 model year, says division general manager Ross Roberts. This new Flareside pickup will share advertising focus with Taurus, Escort and pickups. Story on Page 3.

Mercedes courting Porsche

DIANA T. KURYLKO
Staff Reporter

FRANKFURT — A casual offer by Mercedes-Benz AG last week to acquire a stake in Porsche AG is likely to lead to closer ties between the two despite Porsche's insistence it is not for sale.

Analysts point out that a deal, offered almost off-the-cuff by Mercedes Chairman Werner Niefer during a radio interview, would make strategic sense for Porsche, which has been hit by falling sales, lower earnings and the loss of several key managers.

Both companies said last week that no formal talks have been held. And Arno Bohn, chief executive of Porsche, and Ferdinand Porsche, son of the company's founder and a major shareholder, said the company is not for sale.

But neither Porsche executive raised categorical objections to the possibility of forging closer links to Mercedes.

The two automakers already have an extensive development and production relationship

see PORSCHE, 40

Automakers roll out '92s

Audi 100, Pg. 37
Ford trucks, Pg. 20
Nissan, Pg. 37

INTRO-92

VW dealers still faithful despite sales downturn

ARLENA SAWYERS
Staff Reporter

Sales are lousy, the product is outdated and the parent company in Germany is out of step with American consumers. But don't blame management in the United States.

That's how many VW dealers feel, despite last week's announced staff cutbacks and another high-level personnel change.

Dealers tend not to blame VW United States, which is a division of Volkswagen of America, the U.S. subsidiary of Germany's Volkswagen AG, and is responsible for importing and marketing VW vehicles in the United States.

Last week, VWoA said it will reduce its staff by 150 employees by March 31, 1992, using attrition and layoffs if necessary. VWoA had 1,745 employees in the United States as of Aug. 31.

The company also named Welton C. Mansfield vice president of

see VW, 40

Novel auto ad ideas draw $100 million

Videos, cable, direct mail slice through the clutter

ARLENA SAWYERS
Staff Reporter

Modern technology is giving car marketers new hope for reversing sales slumps and cutting through advertising clutter created by more than 600 car and truck models.

Automobile marketers, by some accounts, are devoting up to 2 percent — about $100 million — of their collective marketing/advertising budgets to videocassettes, home computer news and information services, experimental cable television channels and highly targeted direct-mail programs.

Advertising Age, a sister publication to *Automotive News*, reported that the automotive industry spent $5.5 billion on TV, print, radio and out-door advertising in 1989.

While the money devoted to the less-traditional type of advertising is a small share of total spending, experts say the proliferation of vehicles, compounded by intense competition, will keep car marketers looking for innovative and sometimes novel ways to break through the clutter.

"Motorsports and golf sponsorships are inno-

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NEWSPAPER

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Chevy mails ABS tape to police 8

inside Automotive News

DON'T PUMP THE BRAKES
Chevy teaches cops how to drive Caprices safely. PAGE 8

A 3,4 TRUCK FIGHT
GM and Ford prepare medium-duty import fighters. PAGE 16

WHAT RECOVERY?
September sales opened with a 10-day thud. PAGE 18

EUROPE SALES COOL OFF
Germany's 8-month string snaps; Europe chills. PAGE 25

SELLING WITH STYLE

▲ Mazda used Infiniti-like teases, then added a car. PAGE 38

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66th year—No. 5412

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corrections

The 1991 model-year production table in the Sept. 16 issue listed incorrect totals for Honda of America Manufacturing Inc. The correct totals are: Marysville, Ohio: 352,089; total Honda: 552,421.

GM restyles small trucks

HANS G. LEHMANN/HIDDEN IMAGE

Engineers have been conducting hot-weather tests on the restyled Chevrolet S10 and GMC Sonoma pickups, due to bow in the 1993 model year. Styling is more rounded, with hoods that slope downward. The new instrument panel is more car-like with round analog gauges and high-mounted air vents. The trucks' sport-utility cousins will be restyled for 1994.

latenews

CONTINUED *from* PAGE 1

advertising schedule.

Overall, magazine spending is expected to be boosted moderately at each division from about $90 million this year at Ford Division and $30 million at Lincoln-Mercury, reports *Advertising Age*, a sister publication to *Automotive News*.

New model year advertising for both divisions breaks this week on network television and in magazines with October titles.

Ford Division "took about 40 magazines off the schedule, which brings us down to about 90," said John Vanderzee, division advertising manager.

Stephen Lyons, Lincoln-Mercury general marketing manager, said the division will use 15 to 20 magazines for Lincoln, down "about a half dozen," and Mercury advertising will run in 25 to 30 publications, a reduction of 15 to 20.

Daihatsu to hike prices 3.7% on Charade, Rocky

LOS ALAMITOS, Calif. — Daihatsu America Inc. said Friday it will raise prices of its 1992 models — the Charade subcompact and Rocky sport-utility — an average of 3.7 percent over comparably equipped 1991 models. Prices will be announced Oct. 11, the company said.

Base prices for 1991 Charade models range from $6,397 to $9,697; Rocky models, from $11,297 to $12,997.

Ford trims prices a tad from intro

DEARBORN, Mich. — Prices of 1992 Ford Motor Co. cars will be slightly lower than pre-introductory prices given to dealers in July.

Ford spokesman Dave Krupp says final prices will average 3.5 percent higher than comparably equipped 1991 models. Pre-intro prices came in 3.7 percent higher.

Firm prices for 1991 models at introduction were 1.9 percent higher than final 1990 prices.

All Ford light trucks to offer air bags by '94

DEARBORN, Mich. — Ford Motor Co. will make driver-side air bags available in all of its light-duty truck models by 1994. Currently, air bags are standard in the Aerostar minivan and Econoline full-sized van.

Air bags on all other light trucks will be optional when Ford starts phasing them in next year, said Ford spokesman Gene Koch.

By the mid-1990s, Ford will begin phasing in passenger-side bags in its light trucks.

Britain to scrap new tax on cars

LONDON — Britain's Conservative government, faced with an election as early as November, said last week it would scrap a controversial 10 percent new-car tax and review stiff new levies on company cars. Industry leaders say the measures have wrecked the domestic car industry.

British car sales fell for 23 consecutive months through August. For the year, they are expected to be down 25 percent to about 1.5 million units. Industry leaders charged that the taxes, introduced in the government's March budget, exacerbated the effects of a normal economic downturn.

Also, Ford said it was raising prices on the Sierra, Fiesta and Granada by as much as 5 percent.

Philippines invite luxury car plants

MANILA — The Philippines government last week opened its auto industry to more competition by offering a new series of licenses to companies wishing to assemble luxury sedans with engines of 2.8 liters and above. Most cars of this size are smuggled in.

The move follows last year's creation of a "People's Car" program for the assembly of vehicles with engines smaller than 1.3 litres. That plan opened the car market to six new companies, who joined three existing assemblers of medium-sized vehicles.

Meanwhile, car sales through August were 45 percent below last year, at 12,758 units, said the Philippines Automotive Manufacturing Institute. It blamed the nation's economic slump and a series of natural disasters.

New Volvo ad uses crash to demonstrate safety

Volvo Cars of North America's first ad campaign since the "monster truck" scandal will again use dramatic demonstrations to illustrate safety, reports *Advertising Age*, a sister publication to *Automotive News*.

The first major image work for Volvo from Messner Vetere Berger Carey Schmetterer, New York, is said to feature a spot for the new Volvo 960 sedan in which the passenger compartment stays intact after the car is hit from behind during a rainstorm and crashes head-on into a wall.

In a spot that ran last year, the roof of a Volvo car was reinforced before an oversize pickup truck ran over a line of cars.

The Federal Trade Commission last month ordered Volvo and its former agency to pay $150,000 each for the deceptive advertising.

The new ads break Oct. 7.

Mazda taps Nissan for dealer training v.p.

IRVINE, Calif. — Mazda Motor of America Inc. has named Herbert A. Clark to fill a new position: vice president of dealership training.

The company said the move reflects the importance of customer handling as Mazda prepares to launch five new products over the next seven months.

Clark will oversee a new Dealer Training Division, which will coordinate sales, service and parts training.

He has spent the last eight years at Nissan Motor Corp. in U.S.A., most recently as manager of quality performance.

briefly

Chevy trucks lose heartbeat

All good things come to an end, but losing "The Heartbeat of America" seems pretty final. Nonetheless, reports *Ad Age*, Chevrolet Trucks are dropping the five-year-old musical themeline. In the big battle against Ford, the S-10s and C/Ks will drive under a new musical line: Bob Seger's song, "Like a Rock."

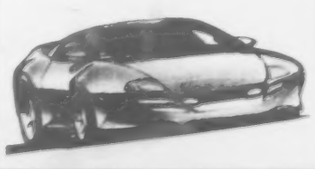
HAYBURNER HEAVEN — Counting on horsepower of a different kind, car dealer Hal Earnhardt has entered his two-year-old filly in the Breeders' Cup race Nov. 2 at Churchill Downs. Earnhardt, 35, is one of the owners of Earnhardt Auto Centers in Tempe and Gilbert, Ariz. The horse, Soviet Sojourn, is a favorite in the $1 million race.

DA ACCORD — **Honda's** Moscow store is doing so well, the company and its trading partner Kanematsu Corp. plan to open another point in Leningrad by late 1992. Muscovites bought 33 units between the grand opening in May and the post-coup end of August. The goal is 100 a year at Leningrad Honda. But it might be St. Petersburg Honda by then.

TRUCK WITH FLARE — One of the more striking vehicles displayed at **Ford Division's** model rollout in Detroit last week was a metallic blue, full-sized truck owned by racer Bill Elliott. The Flareside, F-series truck, accented with reddish-orange stripes, was customized by Jack Roush, a Michigan entrepreneur and race car fan who supplies performance engines to Ford. Elliott's 5.8-liter V-8 engine pumps out 300 horsepower; the regular 5.8-liter V-8 delivers 200. Ford spokesman Mike Parris says the flareside truck, which Ford will reintroduce later this year after a five-year absence, "is a real status thing, a cowboy status," particularly in states such as Texas and Oklahoma.

NEW HOT WHEELS — The new **Subaru** SVX and **Mazda** MX-3 have barely reached U.S. shores, but already the government thinks they'll have high theft appeal. The two coupes, the **BMW** 3 series and the **Oldsmobile** Delta Eighty Eight have been added to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's list of "high-theft" lines. They and 103 others must carry identification numbers on major parts. Five cars exempt because of anti-theft equipment: the BMW 850, **Acura** Vigor, **Porsche** 968 and **Lexus** SC300 and SC400. Last year, 1.3 million cars changed hands illegally, according to the FBI's uniform crime report.

MUSTANG MADNESS — **Ford Motor Co.** is keeping the 1994 or 1995 version of its venerable Mustang well hidden, so *Motor Trend* magazine and its *Car Craft* and *Hot Rod* siblings ran a contest, asking the public to "Design the Next Generation Mustang." Winner was Chris Ito, a designer with ASC Inc., the Southgate, Mich., convertible house. Ito's prize is a ragtop 1992 Mustang, converted by rival C&C Inc. of Brighton, Mich.



Winner in Mustang design contest

trucks

Sales of big trucks continue to ride a rocky road

JOSEPH BOHN
Truck Editor

Medium- and heavy-truck sales continued their lackluster performance in August.

Class 5 and 6 sales were not as bad in August as in earlier months on a year-to-year comparison, but Class 7 and 8 sales continued to worsen, according to figures provided by the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association.

Mack Trucks Inc.'s sales continued their substantial decline.

In August, Mack's sales were down 45 percent from August 1990, and the total for the first eight months of the 1991 calendar year was 37.5 percent below 1990.

Separately, Rothschild Inc., a New York-based investment firm, said net new orders for heavy trucks totaled 7,776 for August, up 10.8 percent from 7,020 in July.

But the total was sharply below the 10,014 net new orders booked in August 1990.

Frank Prezelski, an analyst with Rothschild, said that while the new-order totals are not very good, the trend shows improvement if adjustments are made for pre-buying to beat price increases in May.

in brief

TRUCKS

Detroit Diesel increases sales

DETROIT — Detroit Diesel Corp.'s share of the North American Class 8 diesel engine truck market is at a 15-year high.

Detroit Diesel's share reached 23.6 percent for the first seven months of calendar 1991, according to the Motor Vehicle Manufacturers Association.

Roger S. Penske, Detroit Diesel chairman, said production capacity will increase to 34,000 units annually in calendar 1992 from 1991's 25,000. By January 1993, plans are to further increase capacity to 165 Series 60 engines a day or 43,000 yearly.

About 42,000 Series 60 engines are operating in North American trucks, with a mean mileage of about 155,000. More than 800 of the engines have accumulated at least 500,000 miles without significant problems, he added.

Distributors see slight profits drop

LIVONIA, Mich. — Net profits before taxes for the typical truck equipment distributorship dropped to 1.5 percent in 1990 from 1.6 percent and 1.7 percent in the prior two years.

The National Truck Equipment Association's annual survey also showed that even the top 25 percent highest-profit distributorships experienced a continued decline in profit margins to 4.8 percent in 1990 from 5.0 percent the previous year.

The report cited a 1.2 percent increase in operating expenses as the primary reason for the decline.

Sales growth for the 136 firms surveyed fell from 4.2 percent in 1989 to 3.0 percent in 1990. The firms' sales had increased 11.5 percent in 1988.

Joan Christophersen-Call, a spokeswoman for the association, said the annual product meeting in September drew 360 attendees, about the same as in previous years. The National Truck Equipment Association has about 1,325 member companies.

Paccar renames parts operation

BELLEVUE, Wash. — Paccar Inc. changed the name of its retail automotive parts subsidiary, General Automotive Inc., to Paccar Automotive Inc.

The action was one of several to position Paccar's auto parts business for long-term growth, according to M.A. Tembreull, Paccar Automotive president.

AUGUST 1991 TRUCK SALES BY GVW

	August 1991	August 1990	8 mos., 1991	8 mos., 1990
Class 1-3	99,329	115,356	788,590	958,333
Class 4	1,419	2,084	13,718	19,338
Class 6	422	737	3,672	4,051
Class 7	1,407	2,249	13,737	18,864
Class 8	518	1,004	5,546	9,388
FORD	**103,095**	**121,430**	**825,263**	**1,009,974**
Class 6	1	0	1	0
Class 7	9	0	9	0
Class 8	1,849	2,400	14,483	16,228
FREIGHTLINER	**1,859**	**2,400**	**14,493**	**16,228**
Class 1-3	89,850	106,399	726,075	882,593
Class 4	188	0	1,092	0
Class 5	32	15	94	200
Class 6	221	567	2,085	4,854
Class 7	495	539	4,270	4,836
CHEVROLET	**90,786**	**107,520**	**733,616**	**892,483**
Class 1-3	25,044	27,922	192,172	229,428
Class 4	86	0	713	0
Class 5	27	141	241	1,884
Class 6	186	517	2,441	3,777
Class 7	712	1,453	9,490	10,021
GMC	**26,055**	**30,033**	**205,057**	**245,110**
Class 7	24	39	187	277
Class 8	1,153	1,353	7,484	10,086
KENWORTH	**1,177**	**1,392**	**7,671**	**10,363**
Class 6	39	66	344	818
Class 7	52	89	460	1,092
Class 8	654	1,199	6,988	10,560
MACK	**745**	**1,354**	**7,792**	**12,470**
Class 6	31	53	222	378
Class 7	66	73	539	769
MERCEDES-BENZ	**97**	**126**	**761**	**1,147**
Class 4	2	0	17	43
Class 5	1	13	23	88
Class 6	900	723	5,483	8,706
Class 7	2,929	3,068	21,633	20,698
Class 8	1,471	1,796	15,107	18,451
NAVISTAR	**5,303**	**5,600**	**42,263**	**47,986**
Class 7	14	18	169	282
Class 8	819	1,060	6,244	8,274
PETERBILT	**833**	**1,078**	**6,413**	**8,556**
Class 7	110	49	665	497
Class 8	950	1,348	7,211	9,556
VOLVO/GM HEAVY	**1,060**	**1,397**	**7,876**	**10,053**
Class 1-3	6	24	166	225
Class 4	7	0	28	0
Class 5	31	46	263	326
Class 6	32	78	376	444
Class 7	37	62	417	644
HINO	**113**	**210**	**1,250**	**1,639**
Class 1-3	72	39	412	467
Class 5	71	80	489	623
Class 6	70	55	301	362
Class 7	27	34	238	340
NISSAN DIESEL	**240**	**208**	**1,440**	**1,792**
Class 1-3	422	718	4,208	4,326
Class 4	94	41	680	457
Class 5	68	40	598	278
Class 6	55	62	553	1,362
Class 7	20	33	153	399
ISUZU TRUCK	**659**	**894**	**6,192**	**6,822**
Class 1-3	154	118	1,126	1,253
Class 5	59	52	435	452
Class 6	54	23	261	188
Class 7	28	32	234	368
MITSUBISHI FUSO	**295**	**225**	**2,056**	**2,261**
SCANIA Class 8	**5**	**4**	**37**	**72**
Class 1-3	0	192	908	1,095
Class 4	0	67	297	362
Class 5	0	31	149	180
Class 6	0	17	96	112
IVECO TRUCKS*	**0**	**307**	**1,450**	**1,749**
WESTERN STAR Class 8	**45**	**73**	**419**	**884**
Class 1-3	142,683	137,501	918,610	1,151,443
Class 6, 7, 8	37	30	317	464
OTHER TRUCKS	**142,720**	**137,531**	**918,927**	**1,151,907**
CLASS 1-3	**357,580**	**388,269**	**2,632,267**	**3,229,163**
CLASS 4	**1,796**	**2,192**	**16,545**	**20,210**
CLASS 5	**290**	**418**	**2,292**	**4,031**
CLASS 6	**2,010**	**2,898**	**15,834**	**25,086**
CLASS 7	**5,921**	**7,738**	**52,192**	**59,078**
CLASS 8	**7,501**	**10,267**	**63,836**	**83,728**
TOTAL TRUCKS	**375,057**	**411,782**	**2,762,976**	**3,421,296**

*1991 figures are Automotive News estimates. Source: Automotive News Data Center and MVMA

GM, Ford ready import fighters

New Class 3 and 4 models on horizon

JOSEPH BOHN
Truck Editor

DEARBORN, Mich. — General Motors and Ford Motor Co. plan a number of new 1992½ and 1993 commercial truck models aimed at staving off importers in the Class 3 and 4 segments.

Thomas A. Pfingst, Chevrolet assistant director of fleet sales, truck and special vehicles, predicted a moderate increase in 1992 model commercial truck sales over this year's estimated 1.2 million units.

At the National Truck Equipment Association's annual product convention, Pfingst said Chevrolet has been pouring on manpower, programs and products to increase its market share.

It has expanded its network of committed commercial truck dealers and added several account managers to its Warren, Mich., based commercial truck department over the past year to service dealers and customers.

The company also is launching a number of special incentives for different segments of this market.

Throughout the 1992 model year, for example, small recovery vehicle companies, or "wreckers," that do not receive special fleet discounts will get a $1,100 rebate on the purchase of a gasoline engine-powered C/K pickup cab chassis and a $1,600 rebate on diesel-powered chassis.

The division is providing 90 days of free floorplanning as an encouragement for dealers to stock 1992 model HD-3500 Class 4 chassis.

The GP cutaway is a major new 1993 product for next fall. Although it will give Chevrolet and GMC Truck an edge on Ford Division in a segment currently dominated by the latter, it is also heavily aimed at medium-duty truck importers that have been steadily moving into the Class 3-4 cab chassis market.

The GP features a G-van cab mounted to a P-chassis.

According to Thomas Jensen, an engineer with GM's Truck & Bus Group, the GP cutaway will have:

- High gross vehicle weight ratings
- Straight, unencumbered frame rails for easy body mounting
- A flexible variety of wheelbases
- A fiberglass tilt cab for easy serviceability.

A commercial cutaway version will offer a choice of 125-inch, 133-inch, 157-inch or 178-inch wheelbases; gvws of 10,100 to 14,100 pounds; a standard 5.7-liter V-8 engine and an optional 7.4-liter V-8; and a standard automatic overdrive transmission.

The school bus version will not be available with the 178-inch wheelbase and it will only be offered with the 5.7-liter V-8.

The motor home version will have 158.5-inch to 208-inch wheelbases; gvw ratings of 10,500 to 14,500 pounds; and a standard 7.4-liter V-8 and four-speed automatic transmission.

The GP offers a choice of a two-stage combination semi-elliptic 6,200-pound, 8,000-pound or 11,800-pound rear suspension and an independent coil spring front suspension. An I-beam option is available for the front.

Power steering, 16-inch by 6.5-inch dual rear wheels and a standard 40-gallon fuel tank on commercial and motor home models are standard. School bus versions have a shielded 30-gallon tank.

To compete fully against importers' diesel-powered chassis, GM also is working to get the 6.2-liter diesel and 6.5-liter turbodiesel engines approved for the chassis by the 1993 model year.

"This market is primarily domestic, and we're going to do everything in our power to keep it that way," Pfingst said.

GM cutaways are currently limited to 10,500 pounds gvw and restricted in wheelbase lengths and rail design. Ford's cutaway, derived from its Econoline van, goes to up 11,200 pounds gvw.

GM is also preparing new 9,200- to 9,300-pound gvw versions of its regular and extended-length G-vans for introduction in January. Regular Chevrolet and GMC G-vans with single rear wheels currently go up to 8,600 pounds gvw. This has limited appeal to small bus and other commercial vehicle manufacturers.

Ford already has Econoline versions in the 9,200-pound gvw range. Ford leads Chevrolet in certain commercial truck segments by fairly sizeable margins.

Ford registered 53,800 chassis cabs derived from its F-series pickups in calendar 1990, compared to 16,600 registrations for Chevrolet in chassis cabs derived from its C/K pickups, according to R.L. Polk registration. Through four months of 1991, the figures were 11,100 and 4,200.

Ford's strength is partly due to the success of its Class 4 F-Super Duty, which Chevrolet only began competing against in the 1991 model year with its HD 3500 series.

Ford's chassis cab version of the Super Duty gets a new cab and sheet metal for 1992, along with a new 184.8-inch wheelbase version. The new Super Duty chassis cab is expected to be available in February.

John P. Renaud, Ford product design engineer for special vehicle design and development for light truck engineering, said the Super Duty is currently available in 136.8-inch and 160.8-inch wheelbases. They have five-foot and seven-foot cab-to-axle dimensions.

The 184.8-inch wheelbase allows Ford to provide a nine-foot cab-to-axle dimension to accommodate longer bodies, such as rollback carriers or cargo boxes similar to those on U-Haul-type vehicles.

The frame on the longer axle model is a little wider, due to side rail reinforcements that were added, Renaud said. The fuel lines are are now steel, but generally the structure of the chassis is very similar to last year's models.

Renaud said gvw was increased to 15,000 pounds for 1992, up from 14,500 last year.

★ '90 & '91 Lincoln "S-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-d" Limos ★
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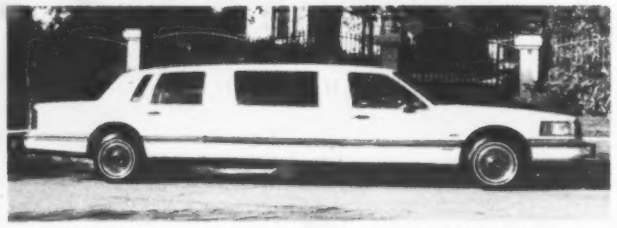

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Circle ReaderService #11

Bentley sparks Rolls outlook

DAVID VERSICAL
National Editor

DETROIT — Nothing like a whiff of new product to stimulate sales — even if the car costs $261,800.

Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Inc. is counting on its new Bentley Continental R for a boost in 1992. Executives say they've taken more than 80 orders, each with a $30,000 deposit, on the new car, which goes on sale in February.

Rolls-Royce's parent company in Britain will ship only 90 of the turbocharged, 6.75-liter, V-8 coupes for calendar 1992.

Even with a push from the new Bentley, Rolls-Royce expects 1992 sales to be about the same as this year's, between 500 and 600. About 40 percent will be the new Continental R and other Bentleys; the balance will be Rolls-Royce models.

The company doesn't release monthly sales numbers, but it concedes that volume is off about half this year. In 1990, the company sold about 1,200 cars.

Rolls-Royce has taken more than 80 orders — with $30,000 deposits — for its new Bentley Continental R.

Howard Mosher, president and chief executive officer, points his finger at the U.S. luxury tax, although he acknowledges that most folks who pay six figures for a car *can* afford the levy. In his view, some people are protesting the tax, which ranges from about $10,000 to $20,000 on Rolls and Bentley models, by not buying at all.

Mosher also cited a recession that has hit white-collar industries such as banking and real estate for much of the decline.

Despite the poor climate, Rolls-Royce will make a big push for the new Bentley. The car was unveiled at last year's Geneva auto show, and the company's 47 dealers have been allowed to take new orders nearly a year in advance of the sales date. To discourage speculators, Rolls-Royce has been trying to give current owners first crack at the car. So far, the owners have accounted for 80 percent of the orders.

Rolls-Royce will pitch the Bentley as a car for driving enthusiasts to help draw more distinction between its brands. The Continental R will be the first Bentley model in four decades that doesn't share a body style with a Rolls-Royce.

Mosher described the typical Rolls owner as a prestige buyer who's not likely to put more than 4,000 miles each year on the car. Bentley owners tend to be younger (about 48) and typically chalk up 10,000 miles a year.

Sept. sales consistent with trend

KAREN DETKOWSKI
Statistician

Early September's 13.8 percent sales decline was the U.S. market's sixth consecutive report of falling volume.

Early July was the last time the 10-day results showed a year-to-year improvement. But that slight gain was achieved only with the help of an extra selling day.

The first 10 days of September gave no sign that the industry is breaking out of a slump that deepened in August. Last month was the first time this year that sales on a seasonally adjusted annual basis failed to show improvement.

Toyota Motors Sales U.S.A. Inc. was one exception in early September: Its Lexus and Toyota brands both improved as the company's sales jumped 6.03 percent.

Among the Big 3, General Motors was off 19.3 percent and Ford Motor Co. slipped 18.6 percent. Chrysler Corp.'s sales, which along with those of most import makes are estimated by *Automotive News*, dropped 8.3 percent.

The Sept. 1-10 period was only the second this year with seven selling days. The daily selling rate of 32,603 cars and trucks compared to 37,821 in the year-ago period, which also had seven selling days.

Chrysler offers satellite services

HIGHLAND PARK, Mich. — Chrysler Corp. is marketing the services of its Pentastar Satellite Communication Network, claiming customers will benefit from the size and flexibility of the service.

The Pentastar Network is the largest privately owned satellite network in the world, Chrysler said.

The network now services almost 5,000 national dealership locations and corporate sites.

Chrysler said it will offer its satellite services to companies that need instant, continuous communication with plants, offices, distribution centers or franchises.

The company also plans to expand the network to include locations in Canada, France, Austria, Japan and China.

10-DAY CAR AND TRUCK SALES, BY MAKE

	Sept. 1-10, 1991	Sept. 1-10, 1990
ALFA ROMEO		
(imp. car)*	62	8
Acura (imp. car)	2,238	2,613
Domestic car	10,231	10,234
Imported car	2,212	2,634
Honda	12,443	12,868
AMERICAN HONDA	14,681	15,481
ASTON MARTIN		
(imp. car)*	1	1
BMW (imp. car)*	1,047	1,048
Domestic car*	3,228	3,348
Imported car*	13	52
Domestic truck*	57	64
Chrysler Division*	3,297	3,464
Domestic car*	6,237	7,627
Imported car*	756	435
Domestic truck*	6,406	6,710
Imported truck*	57	150
Dodge*	13,455	14,922
Domestic car*	1,446	1,036
Imported car*	168	190
Eagle*	1,614	1,226
Domestic truck*	2,475	3,655
Jeep*	2,475	3,655
Domestic car*	3,695	3,793
Imported car*	401	372
Domestic truck*	2,362	2,326
Plymouth*	6,458	6,491
Domestic car*	14,606	15,804
Imported car*	1,337	1,050
Domestic truck*	11,299	12,755
Imported truck*	57	150
CHRYSLER CORP.*	27,299	29,758
Imported car*	97	221
Imported truck*	47	102
DAIHATSU*	144	323
FERRARI (imp. car)*	16	16
Domestic car	19,663	24,566
Imported car	752	1,175
Domestic truck	25,104	27,571
Ford Division	45,519	53,312
Domestic car	2,189	4,592
Lincoln	2,189	4,592
Domestic car	4,857	6,639
Imported car	1,045	1,284
Mercury	5,902	7,923
Domestic car	26,709	35,797
Imported car	1,797	2,459
Domestic truck	25,104	27,571
FORD MOTOR CO.	53,610	65,827
Domestic car	10,547	12,823
Buick	10,547	12,823
Domestic car	4,296	4,974
Cadillac	4,296	4,974
Domestic car	19,830	24,806
Imported car	2,093	2,484
Domestic truck	24,261	25,821
Imported truck	49	52
Chevrolet	46,233	53,163
GMC	6,164	6,495
Domestic car	8,993	11,449
Domestic truck	551	605
Oldsmobile	9,544	12,054
Domestic car	7,555	16,645
Imported car	366	888
Domestic truck	336	684
Pontiac	8,257	18,217
Domestic car	1,941	0
Saturn	1,941	0
Domestic car	53,162	70,697
Imported car	2,459	3,372
Domestic truck	31,312	33,605
Imported truck	49	52
GENERAL MOTORS	86,982	107,726
HYUNDAI*†	2,681	2,578
Imported car*	222	87
Domestic truck	619	387
Imported truck*	1,890	1,513
ISUZU*	2,730	1,988
JAGUAR (imp. car)*	247	382
LAMBORGHINI (imp. car)*	3	3
LOTUS (imp. car)*	5	5
MASERATI (imp. car)*	4	4
Domestic car	658	931
Imported car*	2,907	2,750
Domestic truck	201	0
Imported truck*	2,892	2,336
MAZDA*	6,658	6,017
MERCEDES-BENZ		
(imp. car)*	1,015	1,288
Domestic car	959	768
Imported car*	1,315	977
Imported truck*	477	736
MITSUBISHI*	2,752	2,481
Infiniti	968	387
Domestic car	1,386	1,753
Imported car*	5,655	5,776
Domestic truck	2,181	2,447
Imported truck*	3,223	3,284
Nissan*	12,446	13,259
NISSAN MOTOR CORP.	13,486	13,646
PEUGEOT (imp. car)*	115	72
PORSCHE (imp. car)*	61	132
RANGE ROVER		
(imp. truck)*	62	85
ROLLS/BENTLEY		
(imp. car)*	4	10
SAAB (imp. car)*	485	477
STERLING (imp. car)*	96	49
Domestic car	634	334
Imported car*	813	1,888
SUBARU*	1,447	2,222
Imported car	80	134
Imported truck	260	172
SUZUKI†	341	306
Lexus (imp. car)	1,143	935
Domestic car	3,399	3,277
Imported car	3,673	3,888
Imported truck	3,592	3,036
Toyota	10,884	10,291
TOYOTA MOTOR SALES	11,987	11,136
Audi (imp. car)*	166	370
Imported car*	1,716	2,339
Imported truck*	96	129
Volkswagen*	1,811	2,468
VWoA*	1,977	2,838
VOLVO*†	1,267	1,719
YUGO (imp. car)*	64	99
Domestic car	111,744	139,985
Imported car	33,117	36,789
TOTAL CAR	144,861	176,304
Domestic truck	78,718	76,765
Imported truck	12,648	11,595
TOTAL TRUCK	83,362	88,360
TOTAL CAR & TRK.	228,222	264,744

*Estimated †Breakdown of North American built and imported car sales not available.
There were 6 selling days in the period this year and 6 last year.

Germany cools, Europe sales fall

DIANA T. KURYLKO
Staff Reporter

FRANKFURT — Pulled down by an anticipated but steep drop in German demand, European new-car sales fell 9.2 percent in August, the first year-to-year decline in eight months.

German sales,-which accounted for 39 percent of total European demand in July, plunged 20 percent last month as the impact of higher interest rates and increased personal and fuel taxes began to be felt by consumers.

Sales in Germany had surged 67.5 percent in July as buyers rushed to beat the deadline for a tax rebate on small catalyst-equipped cars.

Reflecting the drop in German volume, to 200,500 units, European sales fell to 1.09 million last month from 1.2 million a year earlier. For the eight-month period, volume was still ahead by 2.3 percent, to 9.8 million units, according to *Automotive News* estimates.

Most analysts expect this year's sales to fall below the 1990 level of 13.2 million.

"We are seeing a substantial slowdown, but less than anticipated," said Stephen Reitman, who follows the industry for UBS/Phillips & Drew in London.

Reitman, who said he had expected August sales to be off as much as 20 percent, expects the European market to slip to about 13,175,000 million units this year.

Sales in recession-stricken Britain fell less than in earlier months. August sales were down 15 percent, bringing the year-to-date decline to 22 percent.

August is traditionally the biggest volume month for Britain's car industry and can account for more than 20 percent of annual sales.

Ford is still the market leader with about a 22 percent share, trailed by General Motors' 16 percent share.

> "We are seeing a substantial slowdown, but less than anticipated"
>
> **STEPHEN REITMAN**
> INDUSTRY ANALYST

Sales in France were off 15 percent last month from a year earlier and were down 14.3 percent for the year.

In Spain, August sales declined 22 percent for an eight-month drop of 15.5 percent.

Sales in Italy fell 10 percent last month, yielding a drop of 3.9 percent for the year to date.

According to estimates, every automaker expect BMW, Skoda and Suzuki posted lower sales last month than in the year-earlier month.

Volume for the Volkswagen Group, the European sales leader, fell nearly 14 percent last month, reflecting its strong dependence on German demand.

But for the year to date, VW sales were up 10.5 percent, to 1.6 million units, and the company has increased its overall share of the market by more than a point since last year.

General Motors Europe, another automaker strongly dependent on German sales, was off 15 percent in August. But the company, up 8.6 percent for the eight-month period, edged Italy's Fiat Group out of the No. 2 sales spot last month with a 12.6 percent share of the market.

For the eight months, GM sales were 5,900 units ahead of Fiat.

Reflecting continuing problems and loss of share in its home market, Fiat sales skidded 30 percent last month. For the eight months, Fiat sales were off 11.7 percent from the year-earlier period.

Ford of Europe said its sales through August were up 6.8 percent, although August sales fell about 12 percent.

EUROPEAN SALES

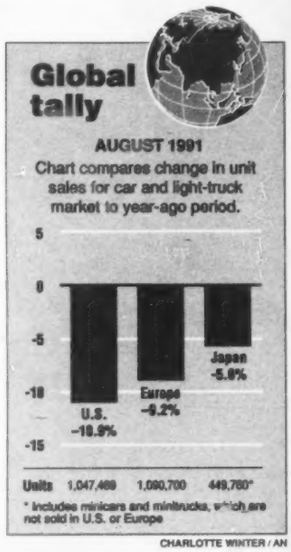
Manufacturer	8 months, 1991	1991 share[1]	8 months, 1990	Volume change (%) '91 vs. '90
Volkswagen	1,599,800	16.4	1,447,300	+10.5
General Motors[3]	1,229,600	12.6	1,132,000	+ 8.6
Fiat Auto[2]	1,223,700	12.5	1,385,900	−11.7
Ford[4]	1,193,600	12.2	1,117,800	+ 6.8
(Jaguar	8,800	0.1	14,000	−37.1)
Peugeot S.A.[5]	1,125,500	11.5	1,218,800	− 7.7
Renault	955,900	9.8	939,000	+ 1.8
Mercedes-Benz	328,800	3.4	298,000	+10.4
Nissan	323,400	3.3	283,900	+13.9
BMW	283,100	2.9	260,800	+ 8.6
Toyota	263,400	2.7	260,400	+ 1.2
Rover	256,000	2.6	286,000	−10.5
Mazda	213,100	2.2	199,400	+ 6.9
Volvo	142,200	1.5	173,000	−17.8
Mitsubishi	139,600	1.4	121,100	+15.3
Honda	120,300	1.2	113,200	+ 6.3
Suzuki	73,800	0.7	70,500	+ 4.7
Lada	71,200	0.7	73,100	− 2.6
Subaru	38,700	0.4	35,800	+ 8.1
Daihatsu	38,800	0.4	28,300	+37.1
Saab	35,300	0.4	40,200	−12.2
Skoda	34,000	0.4	18,700	+81.8
Isuzu (non-GM)	2,800	—	4,600	−39.1
Others	359,300	0.7	272,560	+31.8
Total	**9,776,300**	**100.0**	**9,560,000**	**+ 2.2**

1-doesn't total 100% because of rounding
2-Includes Alfa Romeo, Lancia
3-Opel; Vauxhall; GM-U.S., Canada; Isuzu; not Saab
4-Includes Jaguar
5-Peugeot, Citroen, Talbot

NEW-CAR SALES BY COUNTRY IN EUROPE

Country	8 months, 1991	Pct. change vs. 1990
Germany	3,143,000	+48.4
Italy	1,649,900	− 3.9
France	1,365,800	−14.3
United Kingdom	1,205,400	−22.0
Spain	610,900	−15.5
Netherlands	384,700	− 1.0
Belgium-Luxembourg	373,200	+18.0
Austria	223,600	+ 4.6
Switzerland	223,300	− 5.3
Portugal	154,400	+10.6
Sweden	122,100	−25.2
Greece	99,200	+25.3
Finland	67,500	−37.4
Denmark	60,400	+ 0.9
Ireland	57,000	−16.7
Norway	35,900	−15.8
Total	**9,776,300**	**+ 2.2**

Global tally



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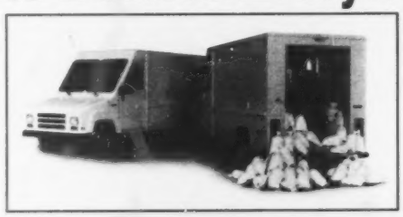

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Circle ReaderService #98

Mitsubishi mulls adding new recreational vehicle

MARY ANN MASKERY
Staff Reporter

TOKYO — Mitsubishi Motors Corp. is considering adding a mid-sized vehicle to its recreational-vehicle lineup, according to Motoo Suzuki, the company's recently appointed head of passenger-car development.

Mitsubishi already dominates the segment in Japan with its Pajero/Montero sport-utility and is doing well with the recently introduced RVR vehicle, a car the company is selling in the United States as the Expo LRV.

But according to Suzuki, there is room for another vehicle or vehicles between the "heavy" Pajero and the "light" RVR.

"The recreational-vehicle segment shows the most promise" for future growth in Japan, Suzuki said. For the young and the not so affluent, he says, the RV is the sports car of choice.

In the past five years, the Japanese market has become more and more differentiated, splitting into niche segments. That is becoming true within the RV segment itself, Suzuki says, and it is becoming necessary to find ways to meet the individual tastes of consumers.

Suzuki says that by maintaining its command of the RV segment, the company can generate the funds to develop its passenger-car lineup.

Expo LRV has sold well in Japan, where it's badged the RVR.

Largely because of its success in the RV and large car segments, two areas still showing strong growth in an otherwise down market, Mitsubishi sales have held up this year where other automakers have faltered.

With the newly remodeled Pajero and the Diamante, Mitsubishi has had stars in both segments.

But Suzuki said the RV segment is not going to divert the company's attention from its newly acquired success in the upscale side of the lineup.

The Diamante has established a name for Mitsubishi in the luxury area, even carving a new segment in the Japanese market centered around the 2.5-liter engine.

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Circle ReaderService #24

PORSCHE

Mercedes takes friendly approach

continued from PAGE 1

that could easily be widened into an equitypartnership, analysts say.

Porsche produces about 3,000 Mercedes 500E models a year in an underutilized plant, a "significant chunk of business for a company that makes 26,000 to 28,000 cars a year," said Stephen Reitman, an analyst for UBS Phillips & Drew in London.

In addition, the two companies jointly developed the Mercedes 300CE convertible, while Mercedes makes the automatic gear box for the Porsche 928.

The issue arose when Niefer, in an interview on Austrian radio, was asked whether Mercedes would take a stake in Porsche.

"We will think about it," he replied.

Mercedes then issued a harder statement later in the week. "If Porsche were to become available, we would be interested," a spokesman said.

Analysts believe the informal nature of Nieffer's radio statement was intentional.

"They deliberately said it in a friendly way," said John Lawson, who follows the European auto industry for Nomura Research Institute in London.

"It is clear the companies have moved to friendlier footing during the past several years as the Porsche/Audi liaison expired. The relationship has blossomed."

Lawson said Mercedes has experience dealing with closely held companies such as Porsche, which is controlled by the Piech and Porsche families.

When Daimler entered the aerospace business several years ago, it bought a 70 percent interest in the Dornier GmbH family business, Lawson said.

"It is not unusual for Mercedes to help out another German company by buying into it. It has a precedent of going in where there is a strong family," he said.

But the families may be willing to gamble on their financial muscle to remain independent, Lawson said.

Indeed, a Porsche spokesman said the Stuttgart-based automaker has no financial need to seek out a marriage partner. "We have more than 600 million marks (about $335 million) in cash on the books and we have positive earnings this year," he said.

Even so, Porsche has fallen on hard times lately as luxury-car sales have dried up worldwide.

Porsche said it expects earnings for the fiscal year ended July 31 to fall to 50 million marks (about $29.6 million) from last year's 68 million marks ($40.2 million).

At the same time, it said production for the fiscal year was off 15 percent, to 26,486 units, amid sharply declining sales in several key markets.

Sales in the United States, where Porsche sold 9,139 units last year, were off 51.6 percent through July, to 2,844 units. Annualized, that would put Porsche sales for 1991 at only 4,875 units, down 46 percent from 1990.

In a bid to slash overhead, Porsche said last week it will cut 550 management and production jobs in Europe by next July.

The company also is working out early retirement and incentive packages to encourage voluntary resignations, said a spokesman. Porsche currently has 8,500 employees in Europe, of which 2,500 are production workers.

The company announced late last month that it was cutting its U.S. work force by almost 25 percent, or 77 jobs.

The company last week also announced the loss of a key member of its management board, the third such departure in a year.

Ulrich Bez, chief engineer and head of development and research, left amid problems with the company's underfunded racing program and a debate over the development of the new 989 model, according to insiders.

HALSTEAD

Cautious about East Bloc

continued from PAGE 6

the buying progress."

Under the plan, which Ford announced for the U.S. market last week, a buyer can purchase a power, luxury, sport or even station wagon model of a given line with limited options. The packages vary according to the market.

In Italy, Ford took a hunk out of Fiat sales by offering engines smaller than the heavily taxed 2.0-liter, causing the Italian maker to accuse Ford of cutting margins.

Halstead said Ford's margins in Italy have increased, but declined to elaborate.

In France, Ford is trying a similar scheme, but with heavy emphasis on diesel engines, popular because of the disparity in fuel prices. Ford's share in France has increased by 2 points, to 9.1 percent, since last August, he said.

Halstead said Ford hasn't tried the strategy in Germany and has limited experience with several special value packages in Britain. But Ford likely will target Spain next, he said.

New Sierra not a 'world car'

FRANKFURT — Ford Motor Co. erred when it defined the replacement for its European Sierra and U.S. Tempo/Topaz as a so-called "world car," said L. Lindsey Halstead, chairman of Ford of Europe.

Since Ford launched the project, "there has been such an acceleration and proliferation of models available that it will be increasingly difficult to smash around a world car," he said in an interview.

The more sensible approach would be to develop "world platforms and world powertrains," Halstead said.

"You get much of the benefit of not duplicating the product development process" while still being able to build for the differing tastes of different markets, he said.

Halstead would not say when the new Sierra will be introduced, but it is expected as a 1993½ model. The car will be front-wheel drive.

The current Sierra has received two minor facelifts since its introduction in 1982.

— *Diana T. Kurylko*

VW

Dealers still support company

continued from PAGE 1

VW United States, responsible for sales and marketing.

William Gelgota resigned as VW U.S. marketing director last spring.

While praising U.S. VW management on one hand, dealers say Volkswagen AG is doing little to give American dealers and consumers what they want — sophisticated, stylish cars.

It won't be until next fall that VW will start selling the third generation Golf to the United States — cars that are technically more sophisticated than the cars they replace but have few styling changes.

VW dealer Jack T. Price is looking forward to having new products to sell.

"I think the new cars will be very sellable," said Price, owner of University Volkswagen-Mazda-Saab in Albuquerque, N.M.

Ten years ago, Price sold as many as 90 VWs a month. For the last two years his sales have averaged about 30 a month.

"I think we have excellent management, but we're selling 10-year-old iron. I think the parent company looks at the European business and if the U.S. (dealers) can sell what's sold in Europe, so be it. If not, dealers have a problem. We may not be as important as the Europeans."

If dollar investment is any indication, North America is low on Volkswagen AG's priorty list.

In April, Volkswagen AG announced a $21 billion spending plan through the late 1990s: $7.7 billion in Czechoslovakia, $3.4 billion in the former East Germany and $6.7 billion in Spain. The German manufacturer plans to invest $1 billion each in China, Portugal and Mexico.

VW officials argue that the United States is a part of its global strategy and point out its plans for Mexico include more exports to the United States.

Still, some dealers feel that their needs have gone unaddressed while the parent company concentrated its effort and money in Europe.

Frank Griffin, owner of Frank Griffin Volkswagen in Jacksonville, Fla., said VW managers in Germany ignored the Japanese competition in the United States for too long and failed to understand that American buyers like cars with "bells and whistles" in addition to quality.

"The Beetle was so successful, we were lulled to sleep," said Griffin, who sells about a dozen VWs a month.

"Germans historically are practical. They have trouble understanding if you build an excellent product, why worry about trim and color.

"We Americans like cars that are chic and modern. We need new products and we need them more frequently."

Despite several well-publicized advertising and marketing campaigns in the last two years, VW sales have been pretty dismal.

Since fall 1989, VW has cut prices, announced the end of consumer rebates and launched "*fahrvergnugen*," an advertising campaign to draw attention to the Germany company and increase floor traffic.

Most recently VW launched "Club Fahrvergnugen," a program offering VW buyers credit cards and discounts on other consumer goods and services

Still, sales are lagging. As of Aug. 31, VW's calendar year car and truck sales stood at 70,349, down 27.3 percent from the same period last year. That gives VW 0.8 percent of the U.S. vehicle market, down from 1 percent last year.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, VW owned the import market in the United States. Fueled by the popularity of the Beetle, the first volume subcompact, retail sales peaked in 1970 at 582,573 units. Sales began to erode as Japanese nameplates such as Toyota, Honda and Datsun, later renamed Nissan, became key players.

A poor sales climate has also resulted in several management changes.

In the past year Hans-Jorg Hungerland, president and chief executive officer of VWoA, was promoted back to Germany to oversee VW and Audi sales worldwide.

William Young, a former VW vice president, succeeded Hungerland as president and John Kerr, formerly vice president of finance, was appointed to the newly created position of president of North American operations responsible for the United States, Canada and Mexico.

U.S. EMPLOYEES AT EUROPEAN IMPORTERS

Importer	Current employees or (expected after announced cuts)	Employees Jan. 1, 1991
Alfa Romeo	93	91
BMW	870	870
Jaguar	(290)	341
Mercedes	(1,350)	1,476
Peugeot*	(125)	178
Porsche	(266)	321
Range Rover	85	91
Saab	400	400
Sterling*	105	135
Volkswagen	(1,595)	1,802
Volvo	NA	NA
Yugo	65	96
TOTAL	5,244, down 9.6%	5,801

*Discontinuing U.S. sales but will retain service operation.
Source: Import companies

As of Aug. 31, VW's calendar year car and truck sales stood at 70,349, -down 27.3 percent

Dealer Griffin said he believes VWoA is on the right track by hiring Mansfield. Griffin also cited VWoA's new design studio in Los Angeles as a positive move and believes the staff reduction is a "prudent business decision."

Ray King, owner of Midpoint Motors (VW-Audi-Porsche-Mazda) in Midland, Mich., said he doesn't believe that VW dealers in the United States have been neglected by Volkswagen AG.

"There is a different mentality in Germany," he said. "European cars have to be utilitarian. They're used to $3 a gallon gasoline. The cars are designed to perform, to operate, to be driven.

"They are value-oriented, not glitzy cars."

Lewis Riffle, general sales manager at Hawthorne Lincoln-Mercury-Volkswagen in Hawthorne, Calif., said he would like to see VW offer more cars with options of the dealers' choice and in colors popular with consumers.

For instance, VW tends to send dealers Jettas with stereos as part of the option package when many customers would rather buy their own stereo, Riffle said.

Jettas in popular colors such as teal green and black are in high demand but short supply, he added.

"They build a dynamite product," said Riffle. "But they need to give dealers more cars they can sell, than those they can't sell.

"Some people don't want to pay $350 for a stereo. They want to go to Circuit City and buy their own," he said.

Subaru merging two regions

Subaru of America Inc. will close its Irvine, Calif., sales and service region and consolidate the operation into its Portland, Ore., office.

The move merges Subaru's Western and Northwestern regional offices into one Portland-based Western region.

A spokesman for the company said the move would "achieve greater operating efficiencies and does not represent an effort to back away from any market."

The company plans to integrate the two operations by year-end. The Portland office will handle sales, service, parts and dealer relations for a nine-state region.

The spokesman said some jobs will be lost in the consolidation but the number has not been determined. The two offices employ about 60 people each.

The consolidation is the third such move in the past year by Subaru and its parent company, Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd.

Last year, the distributor consolidated its San Antonio, Texas, region into Denver, and consolidated two East Coast regions into an Atlanta office.

A Subaru design studio in Irvine will not be affected by the closing, the spokesman said.

— *Lindsay Chappell*

ANDERSON

Cash-poor public slows recovery

continued from PAGE 3

equity, that is, the customer owes more than the vehicle is worth.

As a result, car dealers are closing less than one in five deals. Given the economy's slow advance and the poor state of consumer finances, NADA doesn't expect a major recovery in 1992.

"We will be real happy with 1990 levels of 13.9 million units," said Anderson.

The car and truck market will remain basically a replacement market for the foreseeable future. "Those manufacturers and dealers that are building production and sales facilities based on the heyday of the mid-1980s are in fact building a fantasy land," he said.

He suggested that dealers continue to streamline operations and look for new profit centers. "Right now, our biggest concern is reduced grosses," he said. "Margins have been on a steady decline through most of the 1980s even as sales were rising to record highs."

This year, auto dealers' gross pre-tax margins are hovering at about 7 percent, according to Anderson, less than half the 1990 average of 14.5 percent reported by NADA. The association reported that dealership net profit before taxes was 1.0 percent last year. Dealers are still losing money on new-car sales, Anderson said.

Computer graphics enliven car advertising

JOHN P. CORTEZ
and CLEVELAND HORTON
Crain News Service

Automakers are turning more than ever to special effects as a way to get noticed in the clutter of more than 30 car and truck introductions.

Since the 1992 models started rolling out, at least three companies — Lexus, Buick and Plymouth — have relied on computer graphics to catch the eye.

Lexus decided it needed a gimmick to help introduce the ES300 sedan.

"We wanted to create a halo from the early LS400 image," said J. Davis Illingworth, Lexus general manager. "We needed to connect the LS400 and the new ES300."

The division borrowed a computer graphics metamorphosis technique from the feature film "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" for a 30-second spot.

The commercial opens with a car under a cover outdoors. The wind picks up the cover and blows it away to reveal the LS400. Then the skin of the car starts to flap like a cover and it, too, blows away, revealing the new ES300.

"Morphing," a means of transforming one image into another, also was used in a Buick spot for the new LeSabre.

A hook lifts the outer shell off a 1991 model like a giant sheet — actually an air-brushed silk of the vehicle. Underneatn, it's the 1992 LeSabre.

"The LeSabre was a car with a huge reputation for quality," said John Mead, executive creative director at Buick agency McCann-Erickson Worldwide in Troy, Mich. "We wanted to make it clear that the new car was coming out of the old one."

In another illusion at the end of the spot, a man pulls down a huge curtain with a pastoral landscape and road on it, gets in the car and drives into the image. A quick motion blur, an edit of the car on stage, and insertion of the car on the road resulted in the final image.

Plymouth has four spots featuring talking cars. In the Laser spot, the car drives up and down a brick wall, telling a man in a sultry female voice, "Don't try this at home." He asks if he can go for a spin, gets in and the car begins to revolve like a top as the spot ends.

The division needed an image campaign that would also deliver the facts, said Bert Gardner, executive creative director of Bozell in Minneapolis, which created the commercial for the Laser.

"Instead of just doing an image campaign, we wanted to do an image campaign that could be used as retail, one that the dealers would like," Gardner said. "We thought the talking cars would be the image side, and the facts they presented about themselves would satisfy retail needs."

The actor was alone on an empty stage for most of the shoot. The brick wall was painted on the floor and the car drove over it, with scenery reflected at appropriate angles in the windows to produce the illusion of ascension.

Digital computer graphics and single-frame edits were used so the car wouldn't appear to bend as it turned to climb the wall.

"The whole notion of digitalizing everything from video to music and then just working with those digits and never going back to film has allowed us to do a tremendous amount," Gardner said.

"The technology was originally invented to save time, but all it does is open up more options and make things take longer," Gardner said.

The latest project took more than a month, Gardner said.

"It's not easy to make a car speak for itself," he said, "but let's hope it's worth it."

Sleight of hand is the approach in new spots for Plymouth Laser, top, and Lexus ES300, lower.

INCENTIVE WATCH — CUSTOMER INCENTIVES

CONTINUING PROGRAMS

CHRYSLER CORP.
(1992 models; expires Sept. 30)

Dodge Dakota Club Cab	$300
Other Dakota, DW pickup	$750
Eagle Talon	$500
Jeep Cherokee	$750
Comanche	$500
Wrangler	$400
Plymouth Laser	$500
All minivans	$500

Finance rates in lieu of rebates start at 7.9 percent on minivans, 2.9 percent on other models. Programs expire Sept. 30.

Chrysler Imperial (1990-91)	$2,000
New Yorker Fifth Avenue and Salon (1990-91); LeBaron sedan (1990-91)	$1,500
Other LeBaron (1990-91)	$1,000
N.Y. Landau (1990)	$700
Dodge Shadow conv. (1991)	$2,000
Monaco (1990-91); Dynasty (1991); Spirit (1990-91)	$1,500
Other Shadow (1991); Colt GL (1991); Colt and Vista (1990); Shadow (1990, except America); Dynasty (1990)	$1,000
Shadow America (1991); Daytona (1990-91); Colt base 3-dr. (1991)	$700
Colt Vista (1991)	$500
Dodge Trucks Ram D/W, Ramcharger (1990)	$2,000
Ram van conversion (1990)	$1,750
Ram D/W (1991), Dakota, Ram van, Ram wagon (1990)	$1,500
Dakota, Ram wagon, van, conversion van, Ramcharger (1991)	$1,000
Ram 50, Power Ram 50 (1990)	$500
Ram 50, Power Ram 50 (1991)	$300
Eagle Premier (1991); Talon TSi (1990-91)	$1,500
Other Talon (1991)	$1,200
Talon (1990); Summit ES 3-dr. (1991); Summit 4-dr. (1990-91)	$1,000
Other Summit (1991)	$700
Summit base 3-dr. (1991)	$400
Jeep Cherokee (1990)	$2,000
Cherokee (1991), Grand Wagoneer (1990-91)	$1,500
Comanche (1990-91)	$1,000
Wrangler (1990-91)	$500
Plymouth Acclaim (1991), Laser RS Turbo (1990-91)	$1,500
Other Laser (1991)	$1,200
Sundance (1990-91, except America); Colt GL (1991); Colt (1990); Laser (1990); Colt Vista (1990)	$1,000
Colt Vista (1991)	$500
Colt base 3-dr. (1991)	$700
Sundance America (1991); Colt base 3-dr. (1991)	$700
Colt Vista (1991)	$500
All minivans (1991)	$500
All minivans (1990)	$1,500

FORD MOTOR CO.
1992 models, expires Sept. 25. Finance rates in lieu of rebates are 7.9 percent.

Ford Escort*	$500-750
Tempo, Taurus, Mustang, Probe	$500
Thunderbird, Crown Victoria	$750
Aerostar, F series, Bronco	$500
Ranger	$750
Mercury Tracer*	$500-750
Topaz, Sable	$500
Cougar, Grand Marquis	$750

*Escort rebates are for Central and Great Lakes regions only. Tracer rebates are for Central, Great Lakes and Southwest regions only.

1991 models. Finance rates in lieu of rebates start at 2.9 percent on Escort, 4.8 percent on Festiva, 7.9 percent on other Fords and Mercurys. There are no finance incentives on Lincolns. Programs expire Sept. 25.

Ford Festiva, Mustang	$500-1,000
Escort	$500-750
Tempo, Probe, Thunderbird	$1,000
Taurus SHO	$1,600
Other Taurus	$750-1,250
F series, Econoline	$500-1,000
Ranger	$1,000
Bronco, E150 conversion pkg.	$1,500
Aerostar	$1,000-2,000
Mercury Tracer	$500-750
Topaz, Cougar, Capri	$1,000
Sable	$750-1,250
Lincoln Town Car, Continental, Mark VII	$2,000

GENERAL MOTORS
Expires Sept. 25. Finance rates in lieu of rebates start at 4.9 percent for Buick and Pontiac, 6.9 percent for Chevrolet and GMC.

Buick (1991)* Skylark, Century, Regal, LeSabre	$250-1,000
Riviera, Reatta	$2,000

*Based on option package ordered.

Cadillac Seville, Eldorado	$1,500
DeVille, Fleetwood	$2,000
Brougham	$2,500
Chevrolet cars (1991) Cavalier	$300
Geo Metro	$400
Camaro, Corsica, Beretta	$500
Geo Storm, Geo Prizm, Lumina, Caprice	$1,000
Chevrolet trucks(1991) G van	$500-1,000
C/K (except 454SS), R/V	$500
Geo Tracker	$750
Astro, S/T pickup, S/T Blazer Tahoe, Lumina APV	$1,000
Other S/T Blazer (1991); V Blazer (1990-91), Suburban (1990-91)	$1,500
GMC G van (1990), R/V (1991), Sierra (1991)	$500
Sonoma (1991), S15 Jimmy (1991 4-dr. SLT), G van (1991), Safari (1991)	$1,000
S15 Jimmy (1991), V Jimmy (1990-91), Suburban (1990-91)	$1,500
Oldsmobile (1991)	
Oldsmobile has regional programs. This is an example. Cutlass Calais, Cutlass Supreme, Olds 88, Silhouette	$1,000
Custom Crusier, Bravada	$1,200
Cutlass Ciera, 98	$1,500
Toronado	$2,000
Pontiac LeMans, Firebird (1992)	$500
Grand Am, Trans Sport (1991)	$750
Grand Prix, Trans Sport (1992)	$750
Firebird, Grand Prix	$1,000
Bonneville (1991)	$1,500

HYUNDAI (expires Oct. 2)

Excel (1990-91)	$500-1,000
Sonata (1990-91, except SE)	$1,000
Scoupe (1991, except SE)	$750
All models	$300 to military personnel
All models	$1,000 if Hyundai is traded

MAZDA

Protege (1991, expires Oct.2)	*$800
MX-6 (1991-92, expires Nov. 4)	$500
626 (1991-92, expires Nov. 4)	*$1,000
Navajo (1991, expires Dec. 3)	$1,000

*Or 5.9 percent financing

MITSUBISHI (1990-91 models; California and Hawaii; expires Sept. 30)

Mirage (Calif. & Hawaii)	$750
Galant (Hawaii)	$1,000
Montero (Hawaii)	$1,500
Pickups (Hawaii)	$1,000-1,250
(1990-91; expires Oct. 31) Mirage (S.E. and S.W. regions)	$750

SUBARU (expires Oct. 2)

Loyale 4wd (1991)	$500
Legacy (1991)	$1,200
XT, XT6 (1991)	$2,000

Isuzu rebates run until Dec. 31

ARLENA SAWYERS
Staff Reporter

incentive WATCH

American Isuzu Motors Inc. announced "Isuzu Winning Drive," a new round of factory-to-dealer incentives that remains in effect until Dec. 31.

The program pays dealers $800 to $1,800 on specified 1991 and 1992 Impulse and Stylus models; $1,500 to $1,800 on selected 1991 and 1992 Troopers and $1,000 to $1,500 on 1991 and 1992 pickup trucks.

Also included is $400 on the 1991 and 1992 Rodeo two-wheel-drive sport-utility and $500 on the Rodeo 4wd. All payments are based on the number of vehicles sold.

Dealers also earn a flat payment of $500 on sales of 1990 and 1991 4wd pickups.

INCENTIVE WATCH — DEALER INCENTIVES

NEW PROGRAMS

ISUZU (1991-92 models, unless otherwise noted; expires Dec. 31)

Cars*	$800-1,800
All pickups*	$1,000-1,500
4x4 pickups (bonus, 1990-91)	$500
Trooper*	$1,500-1,800
Rodeo*	$500

*Based on number sold

CONTINUING PROGRAMS

ALFA ROMEO (expires Dec. 31)

164, 164L automatic (1991)	Up to $200 per car monthly in floorplan aid

AUDI (expires Sept. 30)

100/200	$2,000-3,500

CHRYSLER CORP. (expires Sept. 30 unless otherwise noted)

Dodge Shadow, Spirit (1991) Monaco (1991)	$100-700, quota $1,000-2,000, based on sales
Dodge truck Ram Club Cab (1990-91)	$1,000
Ram D/W (1990-91)	$500
Ramcharger (1990-91)	$1,000
Eagle Premier (1991)	$1,000-2,000, based on sales
Jeep Cherokee (1991)	$500
Plymouth Sundance, Acclaim (1990-91) Minivans (1991) without air bags	$100-700, quota $500

FORD MOTOR CO. (expires Sept. 30)

Ford Crown Victoria (1991), Mercury Grand Marquis (1991)	$1,000

GENERAL MOTORS

Cadillac Allante (1991) (no expiration date)	$7,500 on first sale, $8,500 on additional sales
DeVille, Fleetwood, Brougham (expires Sept. 25)	$500
Oldsmobile (expires Sept. 25) Eighty Eight (1991)	$1,000
Pontiac (expires Sept. 25) Grand Am (1991)	$250
Bonneville (1991)	$1,000

HONDA (1991 models, expires Sept. 30)

Civic 4-dr.	$400

HYUNDAI (expires Oct. 2)

Sonata SE, Scoupe SE (1991)	$100-300, based on sales

LOTUS (1991, no expiration date)

Elan	$5,000
Esprit Turbo	$11,000-15,000

MAZDA (1991 models; RX-7 and MPV expire Oct. 2; 929 and 323 expire Nov. 4)

RX-7	$2,000-2,500, based on number sold
MPV	$500
929	$2,000
Navajo (1991)	$750
323 (low-volume dealers)	Up to $500

MERCEDES-BENZ (1991 models, no expiration date listed)

300SE, 300SD, 300SDL, 300SEL	$3,000
420SEL, 560SEL	$5,000

MITSUBISHI (1990-91 models; rebates and terms vary by regions; programs expire Oct. 2)

Mirage	$250-1,500
Eclipse	$300-1,200
Galant	$300-2,100
Montero	$400-3,000
Pickups	$400-2,300
(1990-91 models; California and Hawaii; expires Sept. 30) Mirage (Calif. & Hawaii)	$250-750, based on number sold
Eclipse (Calif.)	$500-1,000, quota
Eclipse (Hawaii)	$750
Galant (Hawaii)	$500
Galant (Hawaiii)	$1,000-2,000, based on number sold
Pickups (Calif.)	$500-1,500, quota

NISSAN (1991 models; expires Feb. 2, 1992, on 300ZX, Oct. 2, 1991, on others)

Sentra	$400
240SX	$600-900, quota
Maxima	$800-1,100, quota
Stanza	$1,800-2,100, quota
300ZX	$2,500-3,500, quota
Pathfinder	$1,000-1,400, quota
Trucks	$1,200-1,400, quota
Trucks (Calif. only)	$1,500

PEUGEOT (no expiration date)

405	$5,000
505	$6,000

STERLING (no expiration date)

All models	$8,000*

*Or $3,000 if customer chooses 0 percent financing

SUZUKI (expires Oct. 3)

Swift (1990-91)	$700-1,000
Sidekick (1991)	$700-1,000

TOYOTA (expires Nov. 4)

Corolla (1990-92)	$200-900, quota
Camry (1990-91)	$200-900, quota
Pickups	$200-1,300, quota

VOLKSWAGEN

All cars (1990, no expiration date)	$500-1,500

VOLVO (1991 models; expires Oct. 31)

740 series	$750-1,500
940 series	$1,500-2,500
780 coupe	$2,500

SCHEDULED PLANT CLOSINGS

Plant	Weeks down	Units lost/ week
CHRYSLER		
Bramalea, Ontario	9/23	
Dodge Monaco		380
Eagle Premier		1,005
FORD		
Dearborn, Mich.	9/23	*
Ford Mustang		
Kentucky Truck (Louisville)	9/23	
Ford heavy trucks		850
Total Canada car		1,385
Total U.S. truck		850
Total units lost week of 9/23		2,235

*Plant maintenance
Source: Automotive News Data Center

Northwood plans classes with schools in Germany

LIZ PINTO
Staff Reporter

Northwood Institute hopes to add a German flair to its automotive marketing curriculum.

A group of German automotive executives and educators spent a week at the college's Midland, Mich., campus this summer working out details for an international exchange program with Northwood and German colleges.

Northwood, which specializes in management degree programs, already has several hundred students from Canada, Japan, Holland and Czechoslovakia on its three U.S. campuses and last year began an effort to become known in Germany.

"We hope to establish some kind of exchange program with students and faculty from German colleges," said Edgar A. Madden, provost of Northwood's Michigan campus.

"Our recent meetings and the agreements we came to will make the international management dimension Northwood provides all its students stronger, whether from the U.S. or other countries," Madden said.

He said the international program's first appeal will be to sons and daughters of dealers in Germany who would come to the United States to complete their degree on a Northwood campus.

Northwood has campuses in West Palm Beach, Fla., and Dallas, as well as Midland.

"It is advantageous for international students to know as much as possible about the automotive industry worldwide to get a good global sense of the industry and to be better prepared to compete in the future," he said.

A transfer program also is being developed to send American students abroad.

Volvo Finance opens in Canada

MONTVALE, N.J. — Volvo Finance North America Inc. has established a Canadian subsidiary, Volvo Finance Canada Ltd.

The new subsidiary, based in North York, Ontario, will provide leasing and installment loan financing for the 60 Volvo dealers in Canada.

U.S. AND CANADA CAR AND TRUCK PRODUCTION

Vehicles are domestic unless noted. Vehicles are cars unless noted.

	Est. 9/16-9/21/91	Actual 9/9-9/14/91	9/1-9/21/91	Year 1/1-9/21/91	Year 1/1-9/22/90
LeBaron A	0	0	0	0	8064
LeBaron J	50	48	134	18846	37989
New Yorker	50	9	60	4838	28973
Fifth Avenue	50	37	87	20786	24388
Imperial	300	311	819	5,902	13,690
Town & Country (trk.)	50	128	307	3,010	2,078
Total Chrysler	**500**	**533**	**1,407**	**53,362**	**115,182**
Horizon	0	0	0	0	4,327
Sundance	2,100	2,109	6,130	44,047	61,853
Acclaim	1,600	1,643	4,739	56,887	79,363
Voyager (trk.)	2,250	2,553	6,859	69,353	64,085
Voyager (Can. trk.)	2,640	2,662	7,942	80,302	73,618
Total Plymouth	**8,590**	**8,967**	**25,670**	**250,589**	**283,246**
Omni	0	0	0	0	4,078
Daytona	0	6	12	5,026	25,382
Shadow	2,150	2,115	6,187	48,866	69,759
Dynasty	5,400	4,554	13,667	88,276	85,158
Spirit	1,900	1,849	5,489	52,480	72,375
Monaco (Can.)	1,054	1,026	2,476	8,552	8,823
Caravan (trk.)	2,450	2,821	7,662	81,054	68,440
Caravan (Can. trk.)	3,504	3,462	10,470	102,904	91,311
Caravan C/V (trk.)	50	61	166	2,492	4,171
Caravan C/V (Can. trk.)	96	94	286	12,446	5,610
Dakota (trk.)	3,600	3,003	8,959	62,809	51,707
Ram pickups (trk.)	1,200	998	4,124	56,702	76,762
Ram Wagon (Can. trk.)	480	435	1,371	14,518	17,003
Ram Van (Can. trk.)	1,495	1,467	4,449	29,323	41,501
Total Dodge	**23,379**	**21,891**	**65,318**	**565,448**	**622,888**
Premier (Can.)	396	433	1,876	9,557	7,812
Cherokee (trk.)	5,600	4,792	13,973	103,705	114,708
Comanche (trk.)	100	112	298	3,721	6,197
Grand Wagoneer (trk.)	0	0	0	1,560	5,297
Wagoneer (trk.)	50	27	149	2,121	28,742
Wrangler (Can trk.)	1,590	1,508	4,688	44,210	43,710
Total Jeep-Eagle	**7,736**	**6,872**	**20,984**	**164,874**	**206,486**
Total U.S. car	**13,600**	**12,681**	**37,324**	**345,954**	**515,399**
Total Can. car	**1,458**	**1,458**	**4,352**	**18,109**	**16,635**
Total U.S. truck	**15,350**	**14,495**	**42,497**	**386,527**	**422,187**
Total Can. truck	**9,905**	**9,628**	**29,286**	**283,763**	**272,753**
CHRYSLER CORP.	**40,205**	**38,263**	**113,379**	**1,034,293**	**1,226,974**
Escort	0	5,539	10,185	150,696	168,427
Mustang	3,705	3,650	7,355	67,468	95,269
Tempo	3,185	2,834	8,578	82,430	95,616
Tempo (Can.)	2,985	1,993	5,051	76,647	82,981
Taurus	10,121	7,791	23,651	234,835	256,846
Thunderbird	3,027	0	5,326	55,559	87,870
Crown Victoria (Can.)	1,989	2,160	6,135	68,233	87,194
Aerostar (trk.)	4,903	4,645	13,225	124,293	154,570
Bronco (trk.)	779	695	1,996	12,626	37,939
Explorer/Bronco II (trk.)	7,679	6,424	20,251	198,696	138,702
Navajo (trk.)	295	228	745	8,546	2,934
Econoline (trk.)	2,685	1,840	5,439	97,475	139,720
Heavies (trk.)	1,038	0	1,859	24,561	39,135
Light trucks (trk.)	11,023	8,372	25,150	221,247	338,273
Light trucks (Can. trk.)	3,097	2,469	7,199	73,663	100,502
Ranger (trk.)	7,614	7,025	20,623	196,790	206,457
Total Ford Div.	**64,125**	**55,665**	**162,768**	**1,693,765**	**2,032,435**
Topaz	1,171	968	3,042	34,634	36,433
Topaz (Can.)	1,294	823	2,144	25,362	31,197
Cougar	1,293	0	2,450	43,188	58,384
Sable	2,467	1,857	5,833	74,983	78,022
Grand Marquis (Can.)	3,069	3,168	8,781	74,161	79,589
Total Mercury	**9,294**	**6,816**	**22,250**	**252,328**	**283,625**
Continental	1,181	1,159	3,303	40,696	43,969
Mark VII	208	207	572	7,126	15,460
Town Car	2,771	2,730	7,733	95,724	111,287
Total Lincoln	**4,160**	**4,096**	**11,608**	**143,546**	**170,716**
Total L-M Div.	**13,454**	**10,912**	**33,858**	**395,874**	**454,341**
Total U.S. car	**29,129**	**25,735**	**78,028**	**867,339**	**1,047,583**
Total Can. car	**9,337**	**8,144**	**22,111**	**244,403**	**290,961**
Total U.S. truck	**35,916**	**29,229**	**80,298**	**884,234**	**1,057,736**
Total Can. truck	**3,897**	**2,469**	**7,199**	**73,663**	**100,502**
FORD MOTOR CO.	**77,579**	**66,577**	**196,626**	**2,069,639**	**2,486,776**
Skylark	1,473	1,022	2,943	30,947	66,417
Century	2,847	2,389	7,589	66,987	48,866
Regal (Can.)	3,400	3,480	9,535	88,978	70,567
Riviera	303	219	666	14,813	16,309
Park Avenue/Electra	1,951	1,674	5,096	79,183	37,257
LeSabre	3,810	3,586	10,413	53,537	118,316
Roadmaster Sedan*	1,268	1,504	3,576	22,237	0
Roadmaster Wagon†	278	265	762	18,444	4,022
Reatta	0	0	0	1,206	5,277
Total Buick	**15,330**	**14,139**	**40,580**	**376,332**	**367,831**
Eldorado	449	319	962	8,125	15,554
Seville	860	592	1,849	17,795	26,107
Brougham	634	747	1,788	14,841	22,130
DeVille	3,718	3,743	10,446	112,953	117,707
Allante	64	64	179	2,188	3,155
Total Cadillac	**5,725**	**5,465**	**15,224**	**155,902**	**184,653**
Cavalier	5,180	5,621	14,839	182,359	244,635
Camaro	1,346	1,351	3,790	38,376	54,338
Celebrity (Can.)	0	0	0	0	20,319
Corsica-Beretta	5,272	3,608	11,321	174,311	209,219
Lumina (Can.)	6,500	6,592	17,805	167,684	157,578
Caprice	2,585	3,057	7,667	97,294	174,822
Corvette	480	462	1,263	15,003	17,007
Astro (trk.)	3,385	3,112	8,495	69,356	95,024
Blazer (trk.)	20	19	55	5,594	13,181
Lumina APV (trk.)	1,907	1,690	4,819	30,730	63,306
Mediums (trk.)	216	138	370	1,367	8,132
P-Model (trk.)	510	484	1,344	15,148	17,325
Pickups (trk.)	6,460	6,551	17,478	206,096	295,202
Pickups (Can. trk.)	3,200	3,252	8,826	100,595	123,512
S10 (trk.)	5,447	5,486	15,314	185,980	170,772
S10 Blazer (trk.)	2,015	2,106	5,474	30,244	81,278
Sportsvan (trk.)	1,145	1,163	3,205	30,005	44,661
Sportsvan (Can. trk.)	800	822	2,757	36,941	37,515
Suburban (trk.)	40	1	41	21,147	52,597
Total Chevrolet	**46,508**	**45,515**	**124,863**	**1,408,230**	**1,880,425**
Calais	0	0	0	34,616	75,184
Cutlass Ciera	3,668	3,092	9,804	67,771	54,015
Cutlass Ciera (Can.)	0	0	0	41,089	57,387
Cutlass Supreme	3,150	1,903	6,959	75,858	67,985
Toronado	181	154	426	3,639	11,492
88	3,397	3,088	8,900	59,340	76,382
Custom Cruiser Wag.88	139	148	405	6,364	1,214
98	1,482	1,522	4,098	57,827	33,997
Silhouette (trk.)	405	349	1,011	14,490	24,345
Bravada (trk.)	258	294	754	11,211	0
Total Oldsmobile	**12,680**	**10,550**	**32,357**	**372,285**	**402,001**
Sunbird	2,610	2,842	7,449	84,938	114,473
Grand Am	1,777	1,037	3,192	90,658	153,648
Firebird	654	649	1,830	14,476	32,224
Grand Prix	2,834	2,248	6,433	74,835	87,887
Pontiac 6000	0	0	0	19,603	41,571
Pontiac 6000 (Can.)	0	0	0	0	0
Bonneville	2,788	2,213	7,001	52,158	57,814
Trans Sport (trk.)	1,065	915	2,658	19,455	39,245
Total Pontiac	**11,728**	**9,904**	**28,563**	**356,123**	**526,862**
Jimmy (trk.)	12	4	19	1,631	4,057
Mediums (trk.)	384	393	939	2,553	9,021
P-Model (trk.)	35	30	101	1,895	2,307
Pickups (trk.)	2,244	2,295	6,934	88,283	101,836
Pickups (Can. trk.)	900	920	2,811	36,958	46,680
Sonoma (trk.)	1,398	1,205	3,738	44,790	39,190
S15 Jimmy (trk.)	848	934	2,384	11,016	26,900
Safari (trk.)	1,067	1,163	2,961	29,196	33,355
Suburban (trk.)	24	0	24	16,829	26,043
Vandura (trk.)	470	456	1,328	13,377	16,676
Vandura (Can. trk.)	400	437	1,348	16,070	15,163
Total GMC	**7,782**	**7,837**	**22,567**	**282,596**	**321,228**
Total Saturn*	**2,350**	**2,350**	**7,050**	**63,298**	**925**
Total U.S. car	**57,548**	**51,469**	**148,696**	**1,655,980**	**1,989,949**
Total Can. car	**9,980**	**10,872**	**27,340**	**297,751**	**385,851**
Total U.S. truck	**29,355**	**28,788**	**79,446**	**958,393**	**1,164,455**
Total Can. truck	**5,380**	**5,431**	**15,742**	**190,564**	**222,870**
GENERAL MOTORS	**102,103**	**95,760**	**271,224**	**2,994,688**	**3,683,125**
Can. car	1,800	1,323	6,018	74,954	25,500
Can. trk.	1,000	1,041	2,986	33,634	20,150
CAMI*	**2,800**	**2,864**	**9,004**	**108,588**	**45,650**
DIAMOND-STAR*	**3,320**	**3,334**	**9,227**	**113,786**	**98,036**
Civic	1,520	1,164	3,959	64,715	81,612
Civic (Can.)	2,173	2,264	6,637	78,261	75,809
Accord	8,800	7,543	22,058	265,435	236,630
Total U.S. car	**10,320**	**8,707**	**26,917**	**330,150**	**318,242**
Total Can. car	**2,173**	**2,264**	**6,637**	**78,261**	**75,809**
HONDA	**12,493**	**10,971**	**32,954**	**408,411**	**394,051**
HYUNDAI Sonata (Can.)	**220**	**312**	**674**	**18,788**	**15,345**
MAZDA*	**3,715**	**4,756**	**12,345**	**117,744**	**128,784**
U.S. trk.	1,555	0	2,804	49,063	53,559
Can. trk.	165	162	455	5,142	6,859
NAVISTAR	**1,720**	**162**	**3,259**	**54,205**	**60,418**
Sentra	2,726	2,683	7,588	96,362	60,075
Pickup (trk.)	2,726	2,708	7,581	95,208	103,984
NISSAN	**5,452**	**5,391**	**15,169**	**191,570**	**164,059**
Geo Prizm	1,800	1,800	5,004	70,569	71,685
Toyota Corolla	2,300	2,300	6,416	80,291	72,565
Toyota Hilux (trk.)	75	50	158	178	0
NUMMI*	**4,175**	**4,150**	**11,578**	**151,038**	**144,250**
Legacy	1,252	1,201	3,337	41,731	20,803
Pickup (trk.)	568	571	1,470	18,779	0
Rodeo (trk.)	718	720	1,949	19,721	0
Total U.S. car	**1,252**	**1,201**	**3,337**	**41,731**	**20,803**
Total U.S. trk.	**1,286**	**1,291**	**3,419**	**38,500**	**23,402**
SUBARU-ISUZU	**2,538**	**2,492**	**6,756**	**80,231**	**44,205**
Camry	0	0	0	136,263	158,670
Corolla (Can.)	1,350	1,378	3,828	47,268	42,173
TOYOTA	**1,350**	**1,378**	**3,828**	**183,531**	**200,843**
VOLVO 740,940 (Can.)	**70**	**32**	**246**	**5,746**	**5,928**
AM GENERAL (trk.)	**400**	**400**	**1,120**	**14,770**	**16,740**
MISCELLANEOUS (trk.)**	**2,650**	**2,650**	**7,420**	**97,340**	**111,000**
Total U.S. car	**125,710**	**115,676**	**333,962**	**3,876,980**	**4,481,793**
Total Canada car	**26,300**	**25,484**	**71,286**	**785,282**	**768,282**
Total U.S.-Canada Car	**152,010**	**141,160**	**405,188**	**4,661,371**	**5,249,995**
Total U.S. truck	**89,413**	**79,611**	**233,733**	**2,416,213**	**2,953,857**
Total Canada truck	**19,367**	**18,731**	**55,588**	**586,786**	**623,134**
Total U.S.-Canada truck	**108,780**	**98,342**	**289,321**	**3,002,919**	**3,576,791**
TOTAL U.S.	**215,123**	**195,287**	**567,715**	**6,292,382**	**7,435,650**
TOTAL CANADA	**45,667**	**44,215**	**126,794**	**1,371,968**	**1,391,336**
TOTAL U.S.-CANADA CAR & TRUCK	**260,790**	**239,502**	**694,509**	**7,664,290**	**8,826,786**

*Estimate †1990 totals reflect LeSabre (rwd) ††1990 totals reflect Olds. 88 (rwd)
*CAMI includes Geo Metro and Suzuki Swift cars and Geo Tracker and Suzuki Sidekick trucks; Diamond-Star includes Eagle Summit and Talon, Mitsubishi Eclipse and Mirage and Plymouth Laser; Mazda includes MX-6, 626 and Ford Probe.
**Estimates for Mack, Volvo-White, Kenworth, Peterbilt, Freightliner, Mercedes-Benz.
May contain error of one or two units due to rounding.

Blockade no bar to output

ROBIN-LYN RAIMEY
Special Correspondent

A protest last week against Canadian government policies by Canadian truckers blocked the Ambassador Bridge that connects Detroit to Canada and affected assembly operations at several Canadian plants.

But despite the problems and sporadic parts shortages, production on both sides of the border was higher than the previous week.

Total U.S. car production last week was 125,710, up 8.7 percent from the previous week. U.S. truck production was up 12.3 percent, at 89,413.

Canadian car production was 26,300, up 3.2 percent from the previous week.

Last week's truck production in Canada was up 3.4 percent at 19,367.

Canadian car production was 79.1 percent higher than last year, and truck output was up 48.2 percent. Ford Motor Co. of Canada was closed by a strike last year, which accounted for the limited production.

The border blockade and unavailability of parts caused General Motors of Canada to send home about 2,500 day shift employees at noon last Wednesday at the Oshawa No. 2 car assembly plant in Ontario and the Oshawa truck plant.

GM's Scarborough, Ontario, truck plant was down Friday because of the blockade.

At Ford of Canada, 4,800 hourly employes worked short weeks as a result of the border problems.

The Oakville assembly plant and the Ontario truck plant in Oakville, Ontario, were affected for one day, and the St. Thomas, Ontario, plant was affected for two days.

Chrysler Canada had two hours of downtime last Tuesday at the Pillette Road plant in Windsor, Ontario, and shut down early on Wednesday and Thursday. The Bramalea, Ontario, plant will be down this week for inventory adjustment.

In the United States, GM scheduled one shift of Saturday overtime at the car plants in Doraville, Ga., and Oklahoma City, and the truck plant in Moraine, Ohio (postal line only). Two overtime shifts were scheduled for Saturday at the Baltimore truck plant.

Ford scheduled daily overtime at the Atlanta and Chicago car plants and at six truck plants — Kansas City, Mo.; Norfolk, Va.; Lorain, Ohio; Louisville, Ky.; St. Louis; and Wayne, Mich.

A shift of Saturday overtime was scheduled at the Kansas City and Louisville, Ky., truck plants.

Chrysler scheduled two eight-hour overtime shifts were Saturday at the Belvidere, Ill., car assembly plant, the Newark, Del., car plant, the Dodge City truck plant in Warren, Mich., and the Jeep plant in Toledo, Ohio.

NOTE

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Automotive News

SEPTEMBER 30, 1991

66th YEAR

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late news

Honda: Civic avoids duty

ALLISTON, Ontario — Honda Canada Inc. says the 1992 Civic hatchback, which goes into production Nov. 4, will meet local content requirements allowing it to be exported to the United States without paying duty, but officials did not offer figures.

Honda says the current hatchback meets the 50 percent domestic content required to avoid a 2.5 percent import duty, but U.S. Customs has acknowledged that it is investigating the issue.

The *New York Times* last summer published parts of an interim Customs report that seemed to challenge Honda's content claim.

At a press event here last week, Honda Canada officials said they expect to receive the final report in mid-October.

Base Skylark rises $2,835

FLINT, Mich. — Prices for the Buick Skylark, which received a major redesign for the 1992 model year, will start $2,835 higher than the 1991 base model, Buick announced.

see LATE NEWS, 2

Chrysler nears financial aid

Reluctant Mitsubishi may buy Diamond-Star soon

MARY ANN MASKERY
and MARY CONNELLY
Staff Reporters

Mitsubishi Motors Corp. will decide "in the near future" whether to buy sole ownership of its joint-venture factory with Chrysler Corp., according to Mitsubishi President Hirokazu Nakamura.

The sale of Chrysler's half of Diamond-Star Motors Corp. could come at the same time as Chrysler goes to the stock market to try to raise more than $300 million.

As early as this week, the company may price 56 million new common shares. That sale continues despite gloomy reports from the analysts of two of the investment bankers that were picked to underwrite the issue, and despite a roughly 20 percent drop in Chrysler's share price since the offering was announced.

Nakamura said Mitsubishi is not anxious to change the 50-50 venture in Illinois. But he suggested that Mitsubishi might buy out its American partner to help Chrysler through its financial pinch.

To raise more cash, Chrysler executives have also expressed interest in selling their company's remaining 10.99 percent stake in Mitsubishi Motors. But Nakamura said, "Equity is not part of the discussions."

Chrysler is trying to raise cash or shed debt on several fronts.

For months, Chrysler has shopped around its Chrysler Financial Corp. subsidiary and some parts-making operations.

Diamond-Star has a 240,000-unit capacity split 50/50.

Mitsubishi "has taken a passive stance" on the purchase of more or all of the venture, Nakamura said last week in an interview. The company is "simply responding to suggestions from the other company."

Any change in the 50/50 Diamond-Star partnership would reduce Chrysler's costs because the U.S. company would shed responsibility for the debt that capitalizes the plant and for future tooling costs.

Chrysler has been trying to strengthen its balance sheet. Last week, executives led by Chairman Lee Iacocca completed the last leg of a three-week trans-Atlantic tour to tout the company's prospects and peddle 33 million new

see CHRYSLER, 36

U.S.-bound Bluebird

Nissan launched its all-new Bluebird family in Tokyo last week and said this sedan version will go on sale in the United States next fall. The Bluebird line is sold as the Stanza in the United States, but the name may be discontinued when the new model arrives. Story on Page 4.

U.S. parts firms turn up heat on Japan

MAX GATES
Staff Reporter

WASHINGTON — U.S. auto parts manufacturers are asking trade officials to turn up the pressure on Japanese automakers by preparing — but not filing — charges of unfair trade practices.

The President's Export Council, a group of business and government leaders that advises the administration on trade policy, last week asked the U.S. Department of Commerce to put together the paperwork for an unfair trade practices complaint against Japanese automakers. The council acted

see PARTS, 39

GM tests quick service program

PHIL FRAME
Staff Reporter

General Motors is about to launch a test program to see if its dealers can grab more of the $107.3-billion-a-year parts and service market.

The "Service as a Product" program begins Oct. 1 in Columbus, Ohio.

The program aims to help dealer service departments compete with independent shops in convenience and price — even for such products as quick oil changes and tuneups, said John D. Rock, GM vice president of customer sales and service.

Dealers in the program will:

- Open their service departments on nights and weekends
- Quickly perform oil changes, tuneups, brake jobs and other routine maintenance while people wait
- Provide free transportation to people who can't wait.

The program targets buyers of

see SERVICE, 37

GM's John Rock said the program is at least partially in response to concerns that thousands of dollars are slipping through dealer fingers.

20 years of price hikes

Inflation, U.S. regs fed huge increases

JOHN K. TEAHEN JR.
Senior Editor

A 1992 Mustang for less than the 1972 price?

Sounds impossible, but it's true. It's an illustration of the strange games that inflation, government regulations and equipment changes have played with auto prices during the last 20 years.

Automotive News analyzed new-car prices for 1992, for 1982 and for 1972, and the study produced some expected and unexpected results.

In the "expected" column, car prices have gone up a lot. No surprise there. Everyone knows that prices have doubled or even tripled since the early 1970s.

Guess again. Most new autos cost four to five times as much as they did in 1972.

On the "unexpected" side was the tremendous impact of inflation and government regulations on safety, emission control and fuel economy on auto prices. There was no question that those elements have boosted stickers, but the extent was greater than one might have surmised.

Take another look at that Mustang. It carried a sticker of $2,679 in 1972. Now, it's $10,215, nearly four times as much.

But inflation and government regs have propelled that $2,679 price to $7,876.

And today's Mustang has a wealth of standard equipment that 20 years ago cost the buyer extra: items like power steering, power brakes, five-speed transmission, AM/FM/stereo, console, tinted glass and a number of less-expensive niceties. Putting them on the 1972 Mustang (at the 1972 option price) and adjusting for inflation adds $1,981 — after deducting for

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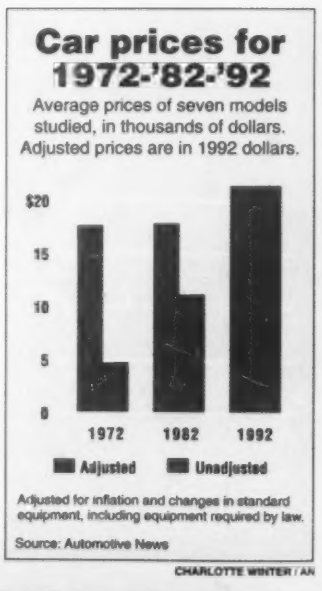

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Nissan revamps U.S. operations 4

inside Automotive News

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Nissan moves experienced people into the field. PAGE 4

LATER CURTAIN CALL
Lincoln says the 1993 Mark VIII will bow late next year. PAGE 4

MID-SEPTEMBER LETDOWN
Despite incentives, the sales picture remained glum. PAGE 6

$49 — OR HIGHER
EPA's cost of on-board diagnostic systems for emission control is under debate. PAGE 8

MOVING UPSCALE

▲ Mazda taps a new market with its new 929. PAGES 16-17

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Overcapacity predicted as Germany normalizes. PAGE 22

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GMC plans an OEM-warranted natural gas truck PAGE 22

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HANS G. LEHMANN/HIDDEN IMAGE

Probing the new Ford coupe

Ford is preparing a redesigned Probe for introduction next year as an early 1993 model. This lightly disguised prototype shows the new car to be noticeably lower than the current model, particularly in the hoodline. Shorter springs on the front struts allowed designers to eliminate the hood blisters. The new Probe will retain the wrap-around glass side windows and rear hatch. Inside, an air bag allows elimination of the motorized seat belt system.

latenews

CONTINUED *from* PAGE 1

The base 1992 Skylark coupe and sedan are $13,560, which is just $305 less than the most expensive 1991 Skylark. The 1992 Skylark Gran Sport coupe and sedan are $15,555, which is $965 more than the 1991 Gran Sport coupe with then-optional anti-lock brakes.

ABS is standard on all 1992 Skylarks.

In 1991, Skylarks started at $10,725 for the base sedan and topped out at $13,865 for the now-discontinued Skylark Luxury Edition sedan.

Legislation to curb Japan rumored in Washington

WASHINGTON — Talk of new legislation coursed through the capital late last week.

Sources in the office of Rep. Sander Levin, D-Mich., said he may be ready as early as next month to introduce legislation designed to get U.S. suppliers a bigger portion of the Japanese auto parts market.

And while the legislators would not confirm it, *USA Today* reported that Sen. Donald Riegle, D-Mich., and House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt, D-Mo., are working on legislation to limit the number of Japanese brand cars, whether imported or built in North America.

Chevy to start sales staff retention program Jan. 1

FORT WORTH, Texas — Chevrolet has officially announced a General Motors salesperson retention program. Chevrolet is the lead division in the program.

Jim Perkins, Chevrolet general manager, said the Salesperson Career Builder Program will start Jan. 1 and is expected to eventually include some 6,500 GM dealerships and 50,000 salespersons.

Seeking to reduce annual turnover rates as high as 80 percent, GM divisions will pay $50 per vehicle sale to retail salespersons. At Cadillac, the figure is $75 per vehicle.

Salespersons must stay continuously employed at the dealership for three years to collect accrued earnings. Dealer participation is voluntary. To participate, dealers must contribute $25 of the $50 or $75 paid out to their salespersons and enroll all their salespersons. If dealers sell more than one GM make, they must sign up the salespersons for all the GM car or truck lines they sell.

Chrysler workers OK 3 shifts on minivans

WINDSOR, Ontario. — Workers at the Chrysler Canada Ltd. minivan plant have overwhelmingly approved a proposal for a three-shift schedule at the plant.

Members of Canadian Auto Workers Local 444 voted 98 percent in favor of the proposal, to be instituted if future demand warrants squeezing more production from the plant. Workers would get eight hours pay for seven hours work under the three-shift system.

Chrysler spokeswoman Lori McTavish said no target dates have been established for three-shift operation.

A week earlier, UAW Local 110 members at Chrysler's St. Louis minivan plant ratified a three-year contract that permits three-shift perations there. That pact covers about 3,500 hourly UAW workers. The three-shift plan is scheduled to begin in January in St. Louis.

Fiat Group profits fall 41 percent in first half

FRANKFURT — Showing the effects of a continuing loss of European market share by its cornerstone automotive unit, Italy's Fiat Group reported late last week that pretax earnings for the first half ended June 30 slid 41 percent from a year earlier.

Fiat attributed the fall, to the equivalent of $1.16 billion, to sluggish European car demand and the company's falling share in Italy, its major market. Revenue slipped 2.7 percent to $21.9 billion, Fiat said.

Fiat said its unit volume in the period slipped 8 percent from a year earlier, to 973,000. The company's Europe-wide market share fell to an estimated 12.5 percent in August, down a point from a year earlier.

EPA releases fuel economy guide

WASHINGTON — The EPA released preliminary fuel economy figures for 1992 model year cars and trucks today, and it was little changed from last year. CAFE numbers continue to deteriorate for the majority of makers.

The 1,875-pound Geo Metro XFi was again the most fuel efficient (53 city/59 highway) car sold in America. And again, the 200-mph Lamborghini Diablo was America's thirstiest (9 city/14 highway) automobile.

Canadian Saturns priced higher than U.S.

TORONTO — Saturn models go on sale in Canada Oct. 3, at prices somewhat higher than their U.S. equivalents, but still very competitive in the Canadian context.

The base SL sedan lists at $9,895 Canadian, about $8,710 U.S. at current exchange rates. In the United States, the 1992 SL sticker is $8,195.

Other Saturn prices in Canada are SL1 sedan, $9,695 ($8,530 U.S.); SL2 sedan $13,895 ($12,200 U.S.) and SC coupe $14,620 ($12,865).

Animal-rights group protests GM tests

ROCKVILLE, Md. — Animal-rights activists threatened to picket General Motors dealerships in 20 states last Saturday.

The Rockville-based organization People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals contends that GM researchers should have been conducting safety experiments using computer models and dummies instead of live animals.

In a statement, GM said it has "conducted only a limited amount of animal testing, but only when alternative methods were not available."

briefly

NADA imports key speaker

For the first time, an import automotive executive will keynote the annual National Automobile Dealers Association convention. Richard Recchia, **Mitsubishi Motor Sales of America Inc.** executive vice president, will speak at the Saturday session when the group meets in Dallas Feb. 8-11. For Recchia, who in the past had been critical of the fact that the keynote spot always went to Big 3 bigwigs, the moment will be sweet.

DOCTORED HUMOR — Lee Miskowski, **Lincoln-Mercury** general manager, passes along the latest joke moving through automotive circles: Why does the U.S. auto industry call the Japanese assembly plants in this country transplants? In hope the main body will reject them.

THIRTY SOMETHING — In six months, **Infiniti** will introduce a new mid-level 3.0-liter sedan that will be sold alongside the M30, G20 and Q45. The new one's digits will be 30, but Infiniti folks are keeping the car's first initial secret until next year. However, at a Mazda press event a slide showing competitors mentioned a car).

FREQUENT FLIER — Clark Vitulli, **Mazda Motor of America Inc.'s** senior vice president, plans to put a lot of miles on his newest model. Vitulli became a first-time dad Sept. 10 when eight-pound Christopher Joseph Vitulli debuted. On Sept. 11, Vitulli applied for Christopher's travel documents. He wants to take the lad on an upcoming dealer trip to Europe.

NOT EXACTLY, BOB — "The consensus in the Bush administration is that the economy has come out of the recession," said Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher to the President's Export Council last week. Then he asked the council members, who advise the White House, what they thought. "From the automotive standpoint, the economy is just coasting," said Heinz Prechter, head of ASC Inc., and council chairman.

Poling: stimulate the economy

Ford Motor Co. boss Harold Poling urged the government to stimulate the economy by dropping interest rates more, saying "the risks of doing nothing are probably greater than the risks of taking action."

MOVING DAY? — The buzz among Saab dealers is that **Saab Cars USA Inc.** may move its headquarters from Orange, Conn., to the Atlanta area to be near its cousin, **Lotus Cars U.S.A. Inc. General Motors** Europe owns Lotus and owns half of Saab's Swedish parent company. A U.S. Lotus spokesman said last week, "Nothing has been finalized," but he acknowledged there might be some logic to such a move since "everyone is looking to economize" and both companies are related to GM.

OPERATION WINDY CITY — Desert Storm veterans who work in **Ford Motor Co.'s** Chicago assembly plant and Ford Division General Manager Ross Roberts were among those who saluted the delivery of the 25,000th vehicle sold under Ford's Military Appreciation Purchase Program. It was also the first official delivery of a 1992 Taurus. U.S. Air National Guard Master Sgt. Sam Scinta of Mount Prospect, Ill., took delivery of the blue Taurus GL sedan last Thursday.

RECREATIONAL VEHICLE WHOLESALE DELIVERIES

	July 1991	July 1990	% change	7 mos. 1991	7 mos. 1990	% change
Travel trailers	4,900	5,200	– 5.8	31,700	36,700	– 13.6
Park Trailers	600	500	+ 20.0	3,900	4,200	– 7.1
Travel trailers—fifth wheel	2,300	2,100	+ 9.5	16,400	18,700	– 12.3
Folding camping trailers	2,900	2,700	+ 7.4	20,100	19,600	+ 2.6
Truck campers	1,000	700	+ 42.9	6,200	6,400	– 3.1
Towable RV total	**11,700**	**11,200**	**+ 4.5**	**78,300**	**85,600**	**– 8.5**
Conventional (type A)	2,200	2,400	– 8.3	13,700	20,100	– 31.8
Van Campers (type B)	300	500	– 40.0	2,400	3,800	– 36.8
Chopped vans (all)	1,600	1,500	+ 6.7	9,400	12,300	– 23.6
Motor home total	**4,100**	**4,400**	**– 6.8**	**25,500**	**36,200**	**– 29.6**
Van conversions	14,400	16,100	– 10.6	74,000	118,300	– 37.4
TOTAL ALL RVs	**30,200**	**31,700**	**– 4.7**	**177,800**	**240,100**	**– 25.9**

Source: Recreation Vehicle Industry Association

July RV sales continue upturn

RESTON, Va. — Wholesale sales of van conversions continue to rebound, with July posting the best monthly showing of the year.

July's 14,400 shipments were still off 10.6 percent from July 1990, according to the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association.

But they were a sharp improvement over the 37.4 percent decline for the first seven months of calendar 1991 during which the industry shipped 118,300 units.

Overall RV shipments totaling 31,700 were off 4.7 percent in July. Shipments totaling 240,100 were off 25.9 percent for seven months.

RVIA expects the rebound to continue throughout 1992.

Converters may hold GM surplus

JOSEPH BOHN
Truck Editor

General Motors still doesn't know where it will stockpile extra van conversion chassis as it prepares to end van production at its Lordstown, Ohio, assembly facility. But officials are leaning toward a plan to have converters stock the extra vans and giving them floorplan assistance.

GM will phase out production of the full-sized Chevrolet and GMC G-van on March 20 at Lordstown. The plant will be converted to build the Chevrolet Cavalier and the Pontiac Sunbird.

G-van production will be transfered to Flint, Mich., but won't begin until August. During the six-month interval, Scarborough, Ontario, will be the only GM plant producing full-sized vans.

GM told converters that Lordstown and Scarborough will operate at maximum overtime this winter to build up inventory for the spring and to offset any shortfall from the Lordstown shutdown.

GM's problem has been where to stockpile the extra units. Officials continue to favor a plan to place the extra units with converters and giving them some kind of floorplan assistance to cover the cost of doing so.

Converters are amenable to the idea, as long as it doesn't cost them money. But converters will still have the problem of trying to outguess the spring and summer markets. Normally, they are not in a position of having to guess their chassis needs and placing orders six months in advance.

"If we project that we'll build 4,000 (van conversions) and the market is soft, we could end up with 2,000 too many chassis," said one converter. But, he added, the bailment companies have been working very well together on trading chassis and dispersing product among themselves.

Van conversion chassis normally account for about 40 percent of GM's full-sized van sales.

GM also will have to devise a plan for handling extra stocks of full-sized passenger vans.

Opel to sell new Trooper

Isuzu, GM discuss new V-8 for U.S.

RICHARD JOHNSON
Staff Reporter

TOKYO — Isuzu Motors Ltd. will supply General Motors with a new upmarket four-wheel-drive recreational vehicle for sale in Europe beginning next year, and Isuzu is talking with GM about providing a new V-8 engine for the Chevy Blazer/GMC Jimmy in the United States.

Sources confirm GM Europe will import a version of the forthcoming Isuzu Trooper replacement with an Opel/Vauxhall badge.

The new Opel/Vauxhall will be called Monterey and will arrive in Europe in mid-1992, probably debuting at the Geneva auto show. Engine offerings will include a multi-valve 3.2-liter V-6.

GM Europe's off-roader will be pitched above a derivative of the Isuzu Amiga/Rodeo being introduced this fall in two- and four-door bodystyles. The smaller version is sold as the Opel Frontera.

Isuzu, which is 37.5 percent owned by General Motors, supplies cars sold as the Geo Storm in the United States. In Japan, Isuzu markets Opel vehicles.

Isuzu is expected to launch its new Trooper at next month's Tokyo show. It is larger, rounder and more upscale than its predecessor. It will arrive in the United States next year.

The Opel Frontera is produced at IBC Vehicles Ltd., the GM/Isuzu joint venture in Luton, England. Along with Frontera, which is powered by an Opel engine, the factory builds Isuzu and Suzuki light trucks. The Monterey will be exported directly to European markets from Japan.

Isuzu and Opel also are rumored to be co-developing a light truck based on the Isuzu Fargo, using GM Europe powerplants. That model would also be produced at IBC, beginning in 1993 or 1994.

Meanwhile, Isuzu may supply GM in the United States with a new modular V-8 engine it is developing. The Isuzu powerplant would be fitted in the GMC Jimmy/Chevy Blazer 4wd sport-utility series.

Sources say no decision has been reached. "We are exploring opportunities with Isuzu, but nothing is concrete," said a GM official.

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Source: Response Analysis Corp., as reported in "Real Estate/Employment/Automotive Classified: A Study Of Prospect Status, Readership & Interest," 1986; Mantz, as reported in "New Vehicle Purchasers: Who They Are & How They Buy," 1988

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RETURN

Ford's Walter Hayes joins Aston Martin

continued from PAGE 3

concurs that Hayes was the logical choice to fill the Aston Martin spot.

"Walter knows Europe superbly well. And he loves cars," Poling said last week.

Hayes acknowledged that he is taking over during a difficult period. Aston Martin has cut its work force by 135, to 400 workers, and production of the handcrafted car has been cut to three a week. At peak, Aston Martin can make six cars a week.

Things are bad, but then Lotus, Rolls-Royce and Ferrari are not "jumping with joy" either, Hayes said.

Rolls-Royce production is down 60 percent, and the automaker's recent losses have wiped out the profits of the parent company.

"Within this market, compared with our competitors, we are doing better," Hayes said.

Walter Hayes, a former Ford of Europe vice chairman, will lead Aston Martin in a difficult period.

The supercar market, as he calls it, is going through a challenging time, but he firmly believes "the classic and vintage automobile may be modified, but it will not disappear."

Hayes is optimistic that when the car market improves, even the high-end market will turn around.

"Everybody is reappraising the future of this market. I happen to think it will always be there," Hayes said.

Hayes said he will quickly reach a decision on whether to go ahead with the launch of a new car, code-named Project DB1999. The car, a down-scale Aston Martin, would be built in volumes of 600 to 700 cars a year.

"In the longer term, I agree there is a place in Aston's future for a car placed somewhere differently in the market, perhaps somewhere to the bottom of upscale," Hayes said.

At the British auto show next October, Aston Martin will launch a new Vantage. AN

NADA director folds, resigns

CHARLES M. THOMAS
Staff Reporter

A stubborn recession followed by a stumbling recovery has affected the National Automobile Dealers Association by forcing the closure of one of the nation's oldest Chevrolet dealerships and resignation of director Edward Scuncio.

Scuncio, president of Scuncio Chevrolet in Greenville, R.I., folded his dealership Sept. 3. The single-point, family owned dealership is being liquidated by a state-appointed receiver.

Rhode Island's banking crisis contributed to the closure of the dealership which opened in 1926, according to Scuncio.

"The banking crisis in Rhode Island played a role in the closing of the dealership," he said. "The crisis is creating havoc in the state."

Forty-five financial institutions were padlocked in January. More than 350,000 accounts containing $1.3 billion are frozen in the closed institutions. Each deposit has had a ripple effect among families, businesses and workers. Scuncio has accounts frozen in one of the closed financial institutions.

Respected by associates as a smart auto dealer, Scuncio was a nine-year NADA Region 1 vice president. He stepped down after closing the dealership. Aldo Sammartino, owner of Bay Buick in East Greenwich, has replaced him.

Asked if he will return to the automobile business any time soon, Scuncio quipped: "That's like asking a man who just got divorced if he will remarry again." AN

10-DAY CAR AND TRUCK SALES, BY MAKE

	Sept. 11-20, 1991	Sept. 11-20, 1990
ALFA ROMEO (imp. car)*	**92**	**121**
Acura (imp. car)	**3,846**	**4,124**
Domestic car	16,786	13,364
Imported car	4,858	4,670
Honda	**21,644**	**18,034**
AMERICAN HONDA	**25,490**	**22,158**
ASTON MARTIN (imp. car)*	**2**	**2**
BMW (imp. car)*	**1,578**	**1,572**
Domestic car*	3,227	5,625
Imported car*	19	78
Domestic truck*	119	71
Chrysler Division*	**3,364**	**5,774**
Domestic car*	6,234	11,046
Imported car*	1,134	653
Domestic truck*	13,438	10,551
Imported truck*	85	224
Dodge*	**20,891**	**22,475**
Domestic car*	1,445	1,551
Imported car*	252	285
Eagle*	**1,697**	**1,836**
Domestic truck*	5,190	5,710
Jeep*	**5,190**	**5,710**
Domestic car*	3,694	6,478
Imported car*	602	559
Domestic truck*	4,953	3,840
Plymouth*	**9,249**	**10,877**
Domestic car*	14,600	24,700
Imported car*	2,006	1,575
Domestic truck*	23,700	20,172
Imported truck*	85	224
CHRYSLER CORP.*	**40,392**	**46,671**
Imported car*	146	332
Imported truck*	70	153
DAIHATSU*	**216**	**485**
FERRARI (imp. car)*	**24**	**24**
Domestic car	28,765	35,255
Imported car	916	1,483
Domestic truck	34,687	38,750
Ford Division	**64,368**	**75,488**
Domestic car	3,865	4,829
Lincoln	**3,865**	**4,829**
Domestic car	6,637	10,460
Imported car	1,569	2,112
Mercury	**8,206**	**12,572**
Domestic car	39,267	50,544
Imported car	2,485	3,595
Domestic truck	34,687	38,750
FORD MOTOR CO.	**76,439**	**92,889**
Domestic car	15,331	16,430
Buick	**15,331**	**16,430**
Domestic car	7,955	9,001
Cadillac	**7,955**	**9,001**
Domestic car	28,737	37,732
Imported car	2,517	3,488
Domestic truck	34,380	39,272
Imported truck	60	45
Chevrolet	**65,694**	**80,537**
GMC	**7,820**	**9,592**
Domestic car	11,882	17,995
Domestic truck	791	1,184
Oldsmobile	**12,673**	**19,179**
Domestic car	9,180	18,766
Imported car	937	1,407
Domestic truck	514	879
Pontiac	**10,631**	**21,052**
Domestic car	2,720	0
Saturn	**2,720**	**0**
Domestic car	75,805	99,924
Imported car	3,454	4,895
Domestic truck	43,505	50,927
Imported truck	60	45
GENERAL MOTORS	**122,824**	**155,791**
HYUNDAI*†	**4,022**	**3,864**
Imported car*	332	131
Domestic truck	1,299	886
Imported truck*	2,834	2,270
ISUZU*	**4,466**	**3,287**
JAGUAR (imp. car)*	**371**	**453**
LAMBORGHINI (imp. car)*	**4**	**4**
LOTUS (imp. car)*	**8**	**8**
MASERATI (imp. car)*	**6**	**6**
Domestic car	1,575	2,180
Imported car*	4,360	4,125
Domestic truck	390	0
Imported truck*	4,339	3,504
MAZDA*	**10,664**	**9,809**
MERCEDES-BENZ (imp. car)*	**1,523**	**1,920**
Domestic car	1,841	1,325
Imported car*	1,973	1,465
Imported truck*	716	1,104
MITSUBISHI*	**4,530**	**3,895**
Infiniti	**1,441**	**580**
Domestic car	2,648	3,756
Imported car*	8,483	8,663
Domestic truck	4,272	5,053
Imported truck*	4,835	4,925
Nissan*	**20,238**	**22,398**
NISSAN MOTOR CORP.	**21,679**	**22,978**
PEUGEOT (imp. car)*	**173**	**188**
PORSCHE (imp. car)*	**92**	**197**
RANGE ROVER (imp. truck)*	**93**	**128**
ROLLS/BENTLEY (imp. car)*	**7**	**15**
SAAB (imp. car)*	**727**	**716**
STERLING (imp. car)*	**144**	**74**
Domestic car	2,058	563
Imported car*	1,219	2,833
SUBARU*	**3,277**	**3,396**
Imported car	120	200
Imported truck	391	259
SUZUKI†	**511**	**459**
Lexus (imp. car)	**2,016**	**2,076**
Domestic car	6,283	8,319
Imported car	9,645	9,775
Imported truck	7,160	7,960
Toyota	**23,088**	**26,054**
TOYOTA MOTOR SALES	**25,104**	**28,130**
Audi (imp. car)*	**249**	**556**
Imported car*	2,573	3,509
Imported truck*	144	193
Volkswagen*	**2,717**	**3,701**
VWoA*	**2,966**	**4,257**
VOLVO*†	**1,901**	**2,564**
YUGO (imp. car)*	**95**	**136**
Domestic car	**168,863**	**204,675**
Imported car	**55,687**	**60,467**
TOTAL CAR	**216,560**	**265,142**
Domestic truck	**107,853**	**115,788**
Imported truck	**20,727**	**20,765**
TOTAL TRUCK	**128,580**	**136,553**
TOTAL CAR & TRK	**345,140**	**401,696**

*Estimated †Breakdown of North American built and imported car sales not available.
There were 9 selling days in the period this year and 9 last year.

Fleets may get clean air credits

MAX GATES
Staff Reporter

WASHINGTON — Car fleet operators that pollute less than the law allows may bank or sell their emission credits under rules proposed by the EPA.

The credit program is designed to give fleet operators flexibility to meet 1990 Clean Air Act amendments. The law calls for fleet owners in areas with excessive air pollution to start buying low-emission vehicles by 1998.

Fleet operators could collect credits for exceeding the Clean Air requirements — either by buying more low-emission cars and trucks than required or buying them earlier than mandated. Those credits could be saved to offset future fleet emission excesses or sold to other fleet operators who need credits.

The rules affect fleets operating in the 21 metropolitan areas of the country with excessive ozone or carbon monoxide levels.

Fleet owners with 10 or more centrally fueled vehicles will be required to have 30 percent of their vehicles meeting lower emission standards than conventional vehicles in 1998. The percentage rises to 70 percent of their fleet in the year 2000, according to EPA spokeswoman Martha Casey.

EPA has yet to set the exact standards for the lower emission vehicles. They could include alternative-fuel vehicles.

The EPA estimates that 1.5 million fleet vehicles in the 21 targeted urban areas would be affected by the rule, about 70 percent in private fleets and the rest in state, local and federal government fleets.

Credit programs also are in place for oxides of nitrogen and particulate matter emissions from heavy-duty engines and for stationary emission sources, such as electricity generation plants. AN

Extended service contract company folds

CHARLES M. THOMAS
Staff Reporter

An extended service contract company operating nationally has collapsed, leaving hundreds of auto dealers and thousands of customers wondering whether their extended warranties are valid.

Extended Service Program Inc., based in Irving, Texas, has filed for bankruptcy in U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Texas in Dallas under Chapter 7 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code.

More than 65,000 extended service contracts sold by ESP between 1989 and 1991 are still in force. About 3,500 claims have been filed against them so far, according to a spokeswoman for court-appointed trustee Daniel J. Sherman.

She said the company had two insurers: Homestead Insurance Co., based in Hoboken, N.J., and the now-defunct Laramie Insurance Co., which was based in Wyoming before it folded a year ago.

Of the 65,000 contracts, 20 percent were insured by Homestead, which is paying claims, she said.

But Steve Imber, chief lawyer for the Kansas Department of Insurance, said he has received notice from Homestead that only 4,500 certificates were filed pursuant to its contract with ESP. Dealers in Kansas are being paid, but Imber's office is sending each claim to the insurer.

The trustee has no funds to pay repairs on the rest of the contracts, said the spokeswoman. "We are not aware of any reserve fund or bank account whatever," she said.

But included in the bankruptcy filing under assets is a $987,000 loss reserve account: not much to cover at least 65,000 contracts.

E.E. Seely, president of ESP, opened the business in 1973, making it one of the longest-running extended service contract administrators in the industry. He failed to return telephone calls from *Automotive News*.

The company reported assets of $3.9 million and liabilities of about $639,000. Assets include a $2 million lawsuit against Homestead.

Other assets include an airplane in Hawaii valued at $120,000 and an Internal Revenue Service tax refund for $141,000. AN

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